

1 **BENNINGTON SELECT BOARD MEETING**

2 **BENNINGTON FIRE FACILITY**

3 **130 RIVER STREET**

4 **BENNINGTON, VERMONT 05201**

5 **AUGUST 10, 2015**

6 **MINUTES**

7 **BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Thomas Jacobs-Chair; Michael Keane; Jim Carroll; Justin Corcoran; Sharyn Brush;
8 and Donald Campbell.

9 **BOARD MEMBER ABSENT:** John McFadden-Vice-Chair.

10 **ALSO PRESENT:** Stuart Hurd-Town Manager; Dan Monks-Zoning Administrator & Assistant Town Manager;
11 Michael Harrington-Economic & Community Development Director; Michael McDonough-Planning
12 Commission Member; Glenda Cresto-MAUHS Principal; Jim Culkeen-SVSU Superintendent; Sam Restino; Mary
13 Morrissey; Mike Bethel; Chris Wright; Rick Carroll; Derek Carson-Bennington Banner; and Nancy Lively-
14 Secretary.

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

16 **1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

17 Recited by all present.

18
19 **2. INTRODUCE MS. GLENDA CRESTO, MAUHS PRINCIPAL**

20 SVSU Superintendent, Jim Culkeen, introduced Glenda Cresto, MAUHS Principal, to the Board
21 and the community.

22 Mr. Jacobs requested that Ms. Cresto explain how she came to be the principal of MAUHS.

23 Ms. Cresto stated that she had been in education for 33 years having begun as a teacher in
24 community colleges, in K-8 after-school programs and most recently at a large regional high school in
25 Massachusetts where she developed a theater program, taught health, English, cultural anthropology,
26 introduction to early childhood education, and public speaking. The theater program spiked her
27 interest in administration and she “really wanted to think about what kept good teachers teaching”.
28 Five years later she went back to graduate school getting two masters degrees – one in teacher
29 leadership and one in principal licensure. She began in the Richford, Vermont school as an English
30 teacher and then moved into the Vice-Principal position which functioned more like a “co-
31 principalship”, and has come to MAUHS from Richford.

32 Board members welcomed Ms. Cresto and asked the following questions:

33 Mr. Campbell asked how she hoped to apply the strategies of her studies of teacher attrition to
34 MAUHS, and Ms. Cresto replied that part of her draw to MAUHS is that there are opportunities for
35 teachers to take over other responsibilities instead of having a “flat career line”.

36 Mr. Keane asked what Ms. Cresto looks for in a new teacher, and she replied that she looks for
37 “the passion, content knowledge, and a love of students”.

38 Mr. Carroll noted that part of a principal’s job is to measure the level of success that has come
39 from our tax dollars, and how could she do this. Ms. Cresto stated that the high school is already
40 gathering qualitative data by contacting former students which will help give her the information
41 needed to go deeper into analyzing how our graduates have utilized their education, as well as, areas

42 where our education needs some work. Mr. Carroll further suggested that we work with our local
43 employers and their relationships with our students. Ms. Cresto agreed.

44 Mr. Corcoran asked how important it was to her that the CDC and high school work together,
45 and Ms. Cresto answered “hugely important”. We will work on coordinating schedules of the two
46 entities so that students are given the ultimate educational opportunity.

47 Ms. Brush welcomed Ms. Cresto and looks forward to working with her both as a Board
48 member and a member of the community.

49 Mr. Jacobs thanked Ms. Cresto for her coming and encouraged her future relationship with the
50 Board.

51
52 **3. CONSENT AGENDA**

53 **A. MINUTES – JULY 27, 2015**

54 **B. WARRANTS**

55 *Michael Keane moved and Sharyn Brush seconded to accept the Consent Agenda – A. Minutes*
56 *of July 27, 2015 and B. Warrants - as submitted. The motion carried with Sharyn Brush abstaining*
57 *and John McFadden absent.*

58 **4. CITIZENS**

59 Sam Restino would like to see activities taking place in the Downtown to “perpetuate” other
60 events that are taking place in town at the same time, as well as, attracting people from other towns
61 and states.

62 Mr. Restino asked about the progress of the “old middle school”, and Mr. Jacobs answered that
63 the contract has been signed, work has been started and is on time.

64 Mr. Restino asked about the Board’s position on the clear cutting of 27-acres on Apple Hill for
65 solar energy noting that he doesn’t feel that there will be that much savings and Mr. Jacobs responded
66 that the this matter is pending before the Public Service Board.

67 Chris Wright asked if there has been any more activity on Barney Road concerning the
68 development of the property that the Town owns, and Mr. Jacobs said there has not. Mr. Hurd added
69 that there will not be a solar project there. Mr. Wright has some ideas that he would like put on as an
70 agenda item at a future meeting, and the Board concurred.

71 Mr. Wright asked if there was any information on sidewalks on Barney Road, and Mr. Hurd
72 answered “not at this time”.

73 **5. 2ND PUBLIC HEARING – 2015 TOWN PLAN**

74 Mr. Jacobs will hear Agenda Item 6. Planning Grant Application – Bennington Trail Map first and
75 then come back to the Public Hearing.

76 **6. PLANNING GRANT APPLICATION – BENNINGTON TRAIL MAP**

77 Mr. Monks explained that the Planning Commission is requesting that the Select Board approve
78 an application for a \$16,000 Planning Grant to develop a web-based and print trail map of hiking and
79 biking trails in Bennington. The grant requires a \$4,000 local match that will be covered by the
80 Bennington County Regional Commissions. A draft Scope of Work was attached for the Board’s
81 information and the Town and BCRC will work with the newly formed Bennington Area Trail System
82 (BATS) group to develop the map. We are presently building our relationships with the landowners

83 and will put the map on all websites as soon as possible. We are seeking preliminary approval now and
84 will seek final approval in September after a final Scope of Work is developed.

85 Board members expressed their support of the Planning Grant Application – Bennington Trail
86 Map, and noted what a positive impact it will have on the Town. Ms. Brush added that the Green
87 Mountain Network does go to the trail head for hiker and biker transportation.

88

89 **5. 2ND PUBLIC HEARING – 2015 TOWN PLAN**

90 Mr. Monks explained that we are required to update the Town Plan every five years. The Plan
91 that was presented to the Board by the Planning Commission does not contain any substantial changes
92 to any policies. The request of the Board is to adopt the Town Plan update for a period of time and
93 instruct the Planning Commission to make whatever revisions and/or proposals that they feel need to
94 be made. We have a 90-day time line in which the Commission can get any changes back to the Board
95 for re-adoption. The Planning Commission would like to schedule a work session with the Board to
96 discuss any concerns that may exist. The deadline adoption date is October 9, 2015, and Mr. Monks
97 recommended that the Board not allow the Town Plan to lapse adoption.

98 The Board asked what the risk was if they do not adopt it, and Mr. Monks answered that we
99 would lose the right to apply for grants, existing grant programs, our Downtown Designation, and our
100 Growth Center designation.

101 Ms. Brush has no issues.

102 Mr. Corcoran and Mr. Carroll are not comfortable adopting the Town Plan without any
103 validation presented.

104 Mr. Keane asked if what we lost would have a cumbersome reinstatement, and Mr. Monks
105 verified that anything lost would be automatically reinstated. Mr. Keane further commented that
106 there is a lack of awareness of the economic contribution of the arts and cultures in the Economic
107 Development part of the Plan, as well as, being void of deadlines and goals.

108 Mr. Campbell noted that there needs to be a limitation of criticism of the Town in the Town
109 Plan so as not to discourage anyone that may wish to move here. If the Board does wish to have more
110 direct information in the Plan, then we should request that of the Planning Commission. However, it
111 has been Mr. Campbell's overall town plan experience that they are all very similar in content.

112 Mr. Jacobs stated the verbiage pertaining to changing the zoning designation of property as it
113 exists in the Town Plan, and Mr. Corcoran added that even though this is not a change to the Plan, the
114 circumstances surrounding it are different than they were five years ago.

115 Discussion ensued as to the Board suggesting goals with a specific target date of completion
116 that would appear in the Town Plan, and following up on the chronological completion of those goals.

117 The Board will meet on August 24, 2015 to formulate their ideas and questions concerning the
118 Town Plan that will be taken to the Planning Commission on August 26, 2015.

119 Mike McDonough, a Planning Commission member, stated that he heard the Board talk about
120 reformatting and adding sections to the Town Plan which have already been discussed internally plus
121 input from outside groups. Future discussions on these topics are exciting but "it would be
122 unprecedented and unnecessary to allow our Town Plan to lapse" and would change the complexion of
123 the Town to its residents and to the State.

124 Mike Bethel said “this is garbage” and that everyone knew in June what needed to be done.
125 Mr. Bethel is concerned about the zoning re-designation of Johnson Control and not the Town Plan
126 lapsing. The Town is no longer industrial based as it was 25 years ago. There is a commercial business
127 that has expressed an interest in going in there that would create jobs and generate taxes. Mr. Jacobs
128 stated that zoning designations can be changed at any time and are not related to the Town Plan.

129 Sam Restino would like to not see the time crunch that historically happens around the Town
130 Plan, and would like to see the residents more involved in it. Mr. Restino also would like to see
131 Johnson Control’s zoning re-designated.

132 ***Sharyn Brush moved and Jim Carroll seconded to close the 2nd Public Hearing – 2015 Town***
133 ***Plan. The motion carried with John McFadden absent.***

134 Rick Carroll asked if Bennington had adopted a solar resolution, and Mr. Hurd answered that
135 Rutland had but it has not been presented to the Select Board in Bennington yet. The resolution calls
136 for “greater oversight and greater opportunities for municipalities and interested parties to participate
137 in the Public Service Board processes with regard to citing of energy related projects”. Mr. Carroll has
138 party status and his concern is the aesthetic issue of the Welcome Center if the solar project clear cuts
139 27 acres on Harwood Hill, and is requesting that the Town step in to see that this is not done. Mr.
140 Carroll also noted that it doesn’t matter what is in the Town Plan because a developer can come in and
141 essentially do what they want anyway.

142 Mary Morrissey added that beside the visual impact to the Welcome Center, monument and
143 Country Club, there is also a sound and wind issue. Ms. Morrissey requested that the Select Board
144 intervene with the Public Service Board to express these concerns. Everyone is in favor of solar but it
145 needs to be done correctly.

146 Mr. Jacobs stated that he would like the Town Attorney to give the Board a written opinion
147 relative to their rights and options concerning the Harwood Hill solar project. Mr. Hurd will see that
148 this done.

149 Mr. Hurd noted that the Town received warnings on this solar project about a year ago and the
150 solar company had filed all kinds of documents with the Public Service Board but they are not required
151 to provide any documents to anyone who happens to “stumble across it”. It used to be that your
152 interest in the project needed to be established but Mr. Hurd was not aware of how the law has
153 changed regarding that, if at all.

154 Mr. Carroll added that there was a 6-acre parcel that was clear cut on Barney Road, and Mr.
155 Hurd clarified that was to provide a place to store the debris from Irene and had nothing to do with the
156 solar project. Mr. Carroll also noted that that area was to be reseeded and it has not yet been done.

157

158 **7. ORAL HEALTH COMMISSION**

159 This agenda item was deferred to the August 24, 2015 meeting.
160

161 **8. MANAGER’S REPORT**

162 Mr. Hurd had no action items but announced that the Town received a check for \$20,000 from
163 the Southshire Recreation Fund. The Fund was in operation back in the YMCA days and is closing itself
164 down. It has been managed by Tom Husser, Gordon Black, and Mark Kevorkian and has made
165 donations to several entities for recreation purposes. The \$20,000 is to be used exclusively for the

166 Recreation Center and programming with an annual amount to be set aside to maintain the tennis courts
167 that they had donated \$25,000 for last year to have them resurfaced.

168
169 **9. OTHER BUSINESS**

170 Mr. Keane gave kudos to the success of all of the events in Town.

171 Mr. Keane received an e-mail from a citizen that would like the Select Board to establish a
172 scholarship for a CCV student, and this will be discussed at a later date.

173
174 Mr. Jacobs asked if the Town could roll back the \$350/month rent payment to the BBC, and Mr.
175 Hurd responded that the Board can decide not to charge them rent but “building maintenance is
176 building maintenance” and that amount is far below other rents in the Downtown. This was an
177 increase of \$100/month from what it used to be.

178 Ms Brush agreed that it should be rolled back.

179 Mr. Campbell also agreed that it should be rolled back and would like a future discussion on the
180 benefit of the BBC presence in the Downtown.

181 Mr. Carroll added that Jon Shanahan had stated that the BBC hadn’t had a budget increase in
182 11 years and that he, personally, hadn’t had a pay increase in 8 years.

183 Mr. Corcoran doesn’t feel that it will have any effect one way or the other. We need to have a
184 BBC budget discussion at a later date because, right now, they are in “a gray zone”.

185
186 ***Jim Carroll moved and Sharyn Brush seconded to roll back the \$100/month rent increase to***
187 ***the Better Bennington Corporation. The motion carried with Michael Keane abstaining and John***
188 ***McFadden absent.***

189
190 **10. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

191 **A. REAL ESTATE**

192 **B. CONTRACT**

193 Tom Jacobs advised the Board that there was a need to go into Executive Session to discuss
194 Real Estate and a Contract matter and request that the Board find that premature general public
195 knowledge would place a person involved at a substantial disadvantage and move into Executive
196 Session.

197
198 ***Donald Campbell moved and Justin Corcoran seconded finding that an Executive Session be***
199 ***held on Real Estate and a Contract matter as premature general public knowledge would place a***
200 ***person involved in the subject matter at a substantial disadvantage. The motion carried with John***
201 ***McFadden absent.***

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203
204 Respectfully submitted,

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206 Nancy H. Lively
207 Secretary
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