

1                                   **BENNINGTON SELECT BOARD MEETING**  
2                                   **BENNINGTON TOWN OFFICES**  
3                                   **205 SOUTH STREET**  
4                                   **BENNINGTON, VERMONT 05201**

5  
6                                   **SATURDAY, JANUARY 9, 2016**

7  
8                                   MINUTES  
9

10 BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Thomas Jacobs, Chair; John McFadden,  
11 Vice Chair; Sharyn Brush; Donald Campbell; Jim Carroll; Justin Corcoran;  
12 and Michael Keane.

13  
14 ALSO PRESENT: Stuart Hurd, Town Manager; Steve Crawford, Deputy  
15 Fire Chief; Paul Doucette, Jr., Police Chief & Public Safety Director;  
16 Michael Harrington, Economic and Community Development Director;  
17 Michele Johnson, Human Resources & Contracts Administrator; R. J. Joly,  
18 Highway Superintendent; Justin Kinney, Assistant Fire Chief; Beq Lenduay,  
19 CAT-TV Videographer; Larry McLeod, Facilities Manager & Health Officer;  
20 Daniel Monks, Assistant Town Manager & Planning Director; Joan  
21 Pinsonneault, Director of Collections and Town Treasurer; Jeff Vickers, Fire  
22 Chief; and Keith Whitcomb, Jr., Bennington Banner Reporter.

23  
24 CITIZENS PRESENT: Joey Kulkin; Larry Robinson; and Christopher  
25 Wright.

26  
27 T. Jacobs called the meeting to order at 8:00 A.M.  
28

29 **1. F.Y. '17 Budget Work Session**

30 S. Hurd explained that the proposed budget is up in the 3% range which is  
31 3 cents on the tax rate. The Fire Fund is basically level funded. The  
32 Highway Fund includes additional revenues and the tax rate is reduced by  
33 a penny. The state has moved the bridge project (near Peppermills) until  
34 FY '18. Agencies applying under the Select Board's policy are included  
35 within the budget at last year's level. Agencies placed on the ballot are not  
36 seeking an increase.  
37

38 Requested by J. Carroll, the Town Manager defined the General, Fire and  
39 Highway Funds.

40

41 T. Jacobs and S. Hurd explained the two larger costs in the budget other  
42 than contracted services are the Workers Compensation and Liability  
43 Insurance increases. The Police Professional and Public Officials Liability  
44 claims have increased statewide and the Workers Compensation claims  
45 have increased industrywide.

46

#### 47 **A. Fire Budget**

48 J. Vickers discussed the department's budget process and then reviewed  
49 the line item highlights for the Fire Department within the FY' 17 Budget  
50 Presentation. Discussion followed regarding the ladder truck. It is nearly  
51 20 years old and the department feels it will need to be replaced. NFPA  
52 recommends a life of 20 years and the truck is beginning to deteriorate. It  
53 is showing signs of rust, corrosion, and the pump will need to be rebuilt.  
54 J. Carroll wanted to know how many hours of use for the truck; however,  
55 that information is not known. He also inquired about the costs for  
56 necessary repairs. S. Crawford explained that the department has spent  
57 approximately \$12,000 so far this year. There was further discussion that  
58 a new truck would be in the range of \$800,000 to a million dollars. Major  
59 differences in a new ladder truck would mainly be the safety features.  
60 Current pumps are manually operated and new pumps are computerized  
61 and adjust automatically. The life of a new truck would still be  
62 recommended at 20 years. The Board discussed the ISO rating and its  
63 effect on homeowners insurance. S. Hurd and J. Vickers explained that  
64 the ISO rating is a 10 year cycle and is based on a number of factors such  
65 as pumping apparatuses, water pressure, department readiness, training  
66 and preparedness. The Town currently has a rating of five (5). There  
67 was discussion regarding the 6% decrease in wages. P. Doucette clarified  
68 that the 6% decrease is \$900 in wages based on a calculation error;  
69 however, the Chief, Deputy Chief, Assistant Fire Chief and Secretary did  
70 get increases over this past year. Discussion was initiated by John  
71 McFadden regarding mutual aid. J. Vickers talked about the mutual aid  
72 agreements and how entities work very well together and are always there  
73 for one another. P. Doucette noted that Homeland Security requires that  
74 we belong to mutual aid in order to secure funding. He noted that the

75 Police Department is also a member of mutual aid and must be to secure  
76 funds through Homeland Security. The Police Department can work  
77 statewide and everyone works together. S. Brush began discussion  
78 regarding the proposed thermal imaging camera. The department's  
79 current camera is six years old and is used by the Police Department as  
80 well. Newer cameras allow for early and preventative detection. There  
81 was discussion regarding the SCBA's. The department rotates yearly  
82 replacements given their life cycle and the improvements in technology.  
83 There was discussion regarding the budgeted reserves. There is \$40,000  
84 for a ladder truck and \$10,000 for a radio console. This console is a back-  
85 up unit to the Police Department's and Homeland Security announced over  
86 the past week that there will be no funds for radios this year. The Town  
87 currently uses Motorola through Wells Communications Services; however,  
88 the console at the Fire Department is too old to be supported. J.  
89 McFadden initiated discussion regarding the budgeted \$5,000 for a camera  
90 system in account 03-4570.830. This is a security camera for the Fire  
91 Department to monitor people coming and going as well as the truck bay;  
92 however, it will not be monitored at the Police Department. The rental fees  
93 for the use of the building were discussed. The last increase was two  
94 years ago.

95

## 96 **B. Police Budget**

97 S. Hurd explained that the Police Budget is up only 1% as a result of the  
98 \$98,000 departmental savings in the Town's health care. The Town is a  
99 member of Vermont League of Cities and Towns, a self-insured pool for  
100 property and casualty insurance, and he serves on its board.

101

102 P. Doucette reviewed the line item highlights for the Police Department  
103 within the FY' 17 Budget Presentation. Six new hires completed the VT  
104 Police Academy. The budget includes an increase for training. It is key  
105 for new supervision and preparing for the future. In response to a question  
106 from J. Carroll, P. Doucette explained that a new hired officer attends 16  
107 weeks at the academy, three weeks of post basic that includes firearms  
108 and DUI training, then six weeks of FTO training. The budget includes two  
109 new Interceptors. The current vehicles are coming up on 100,000 miles.  
110 These old vehicles will be sold outright and all equipment will be transferred  
111 to the new vehicles accordingly. Much of the equipment such as light bars

112 are obtained through participation in the Governor's Highway Safety  
 113 Program. This saves the taxpayers money. T. Jacobs inquired about the  
 114 bid process. P. Doucette explained that new vehicles are put out to bid  
 115 and that dealers upstate have the VT State bid; however, if a local dealer  
 116 can come in with a price within \$100 or \$150 the Town keeps its business  
 117 local. S. Hurd added that the Sherriff's Department or Bennington's local  
 118 airport may be interested. We try to sell them locally now. T. Jacobs  
 119 inquired about a police canine. P. Doucette is in the process of talking  
 120 with other departments regarding a program. The cost of a program is  
 121 approximately \$6,000 and he will look to the community for donations to  
 122 fund it. It will not be an additional cost to the taxpayers for the first year;  
 123 however, a small amount will be included in future budgets to support the  
 124 program thereafter. The department currently works with the Rensselaer  
 125 County Sherriff's Department to use its dog when necessary and they also  
 126 use the VT DMV's dog located in Londonderry. Our use of outside  
 127 agencies is all part of the mutual aid. The Mt. Anthony Union Middle  
 128 School Student Council is currently raising money to assist the department  
 129 with the dog. There was discussion regarding a new gator for the  
 130 department to be used for patrolling at sites such as Willow Park, wooded  
 131 areas, wetlands, etc. It will allow the department to be visible in places  
 132 that need it. It will also be used for certain events. Police presence is key  
 133 to success. L. McLeod commented that it would be centrally located and  
 134 shared with the Buildings and Grounds Department. It was agreed that P.  
 135 Doucette will prepare data regarding the distribution of the Police  
 136 Department's services. He reviewed the following stats for the Board as  
 137 follows:

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>
139 Arrests	550	717
141 Traffic Tickets Issued (In Bennington)	1,667	2,485
142 Paper Warnings Issued		800
143 Incidents	6,141	8,143

144  
 145 P. Doucette asked the Board to consider placing Electronic Control Devices  
 146 (ECD's) into the budget. He has 26 officers and his proposal will outfit 13.  
 147 The costs include the ECD device, holster, training cartridges and the  
 148 training. He is not in favor of sharing the devices as they are similar to a

149 firearm whereby each needs to be maintained personally and rely on that  
150 device. He has a policy in place as required by State law whether or not a  
151 department has ECD's. J. Corcoran spoke of the ability to gain control of  
152 a situation quickly and T. Jacobs asked the Chief to explain what other  
153 departments are doing. He explained that most in the state are now using  
154 them. S. Hurd suggested the possibility of reducing his proposal to ten.  
155 J. McFadden and P. Doucette discussed the price including training, and  
156 that there is a method to measure the output of the device. There is a  
157 yearly inspection that is required to monitor the operation as the State of  
158 VT requires tight monitoring of such devices. The question was presented  
159 to P. Doucette which is more important, the ECD's or the Fire Department's  
160 need for a new console? His response being that both are important tools.  
161 S. Hurd reminded the Board that there is \$10,000 in this budget extra for  
162 the reserves that the Board can allocate to the console.

163

164 A break was taken from 10:05 AM until 10:18 AM.

165

### 166 **C. Highway Budget**

167 S. Hurd noted that the Highway Fund budget is increased currently by 3.5%  
168 not 7.8% due to the removal of a major bridge repair project. Currently, it  
169 appears that there will be a one penny decrease in the tax rate if the  
170 budget is accepted as presented. R. Joly circulated information he  
171 prepared regarding the Town Highway garages. We defer maintenance  
172 each year with the understanding we are going to build a consolidated  
173 facility. The Downtown garage will be renovated and used for another  
174 purpose; however, the Orchard Road garage will be torn down. It was  
175 noted that grants simply are not available for this type of project. The  
176 Town will look at a 20 or 30 year bond through the VT Bond Bank. The  
177 consolidation will not necessarily gain the Town large savings; however,  
178 efficiencies. There should be some savings in the building fuel and  
179 electricity. R. Joly has concerns regarding compliance issues such as the  
180 need to have a roof over sand. Equipment needs to be stored out of the  
181 elements for a longer life and better upkeep. D. Campbell spoke of his  
182 tour of the highway facilities. He commented on how close the vehicles  
183 need to be parked to one another. S. Hurd said the new garage will  
184 include a drive through system. R. Joly reviewed the line item highlights  
185 for the Highway Fund within the FY' 17 Budget Presentation. Regarding the

186 need for two seasonal employees, he noted trash overflows in the  
187 downtown and believes once a week pickup is no longer enough. He also  
188 noted many complaints regarding the lack of routine maintenance around  
189 town. T. Jacobs inquired about Diversion assistance; however, L. McLeod  
190 explained that the Town does not use them anymore as they bill at \$50 per  
191 hour. There was a brief discussion regarding the Pleasant/School Street  
192 project. Most of the work will be on School Street. There will be wider  
193 sidewalks on both sides with attractive streetlights. The Town is obtaining  
194 an easement to add landscaping on Pleasant and it will enhance the  
195 parking lot where it meets the street. A property owner made nice  
196 improvements and others are beginning to also. R. Joly noted the \$35,000  
197 photo eye camera at the 4-Corners Intersection. It will allow pedestrians  
198 to cross concurrently. Repairs will be a contracted service. It is the latest  
199 and greatest technology. It detects a vehicle pulling up and it will adjust to  
200 release. The department hopes to do all the projects outlined in the  
201 budget presentation; however all are subject to change if necessary. R.  
202 Joly continued that the bridge deck on Fuller Road needs to be replaced.  
203 Pouring the deck will require closing the road a couple of days unless the  
204 Town can connect the roads or hire it out. D. Monks outlined the three  
205 phases of the Ninja trail. The commitment of private funds, the design  
206 phase, and completion/paving of the remainder of the project. The Town  
207 is now looking to grant funds for a portion of the trail to improve Benmont  
208 Avenue. R. Joly explained that the new tandem purchase will be the first  
209 tandem truck for the Depot Street garage and the fourth for the Highway  
210 Department. The Town keeps its equipment longer than the  
211 recommended life.

212  
213 The Board discussed the agenda for the next budget work session and  
214 agreed that they will complete the Recreation Budget, General Fund  
215 miscellaneous budgets from 8 AM until 9 AM, then interview the  
216 Bennington Free Library, the Better Bennington Corporation, Paran  
217 Recreations regarding their one-time special request, set salaries for the  
218 Town Manager, Town Clerk, Town Treasurer and then conclude the FY '17  
219 budget preparations. This will include the Economic and Community  
220 Development Director's marketing presentation request. The meeting will  
221 be held on Saturday, January 16<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 A.M. at the Town Offices  
222 Conference Room.

223 **Motion: M. Keane made a motion and S. Brush seconded to adjourn**  
224 **the meeting. Motion passed unanimously.**

225

226 The meeting adjourned at 11:20 A.M.

227

228 Respectfully Submitted

229

230

231 Michele M. Johnson