

**BENNINGTON SELECT BOARD MEETING
BENNINGTON TOWN OFFICE – CONFERENCE ROOM
205 SOUTH STREET
BENNINGTON, VERMONT 05201**

MONDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2016

MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Tom Jacobs – Chair; Michael Keane-Vice Chair; Jim Carroll; Jeanne Conner; Jeannie Jenkins; Donald Campbell; Justin Corcoran

Absent: None

ALSO PRESENT: Stuart Hurd, Town Manager; Dan Monks, Zoning Administrator & Assistant Town Manager; Michael Harrington, Economic & Community Development Director; Linda E. Bermudez – Secretary; (6) Citizens

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

1. CONSENT AGENDA (A-B)

A) Minutes – December 12, 2016

Michael Keane noted spelling correction for Mary Gerisch who spoke at the last meeting.

B) Warrants

There were no questions.

MOTION: Jim Carroll motioned and Michael Keane seconded to accept and approve the minutes of December 12, 2016 with spelling correction as noted above, as well as the warrants as submitted. Motion passed unanimously (*Justin Corcoran abstained from Minutes vote ONLY*)

2. BENNINGTON PROJECT INDEPENDENCE

The Town Manager stated BPI is one of the agencies on the March 2017 ballot requesting funds. Linda Wichlac, Executive Director of BPI stepped forward to present. Three BPI Board Members accompanied her. Ms. Wichlac stated they have been serving Bennington County for 38 years. Their facility serves as an Adult Day Care option to a nursing home, which allows adults to age in place.

Attendees are (18) and over and conditions vary from those who have aged out of the school system with no opportunity for vocational training to brain injuries and older adults in delicate physical condition (i.e. post stroke etc). Some are short-term attendees some are long-term. Currently BPI serves the highest number of Veteran's in the State of Vermont. They also have an Alzheimer's division that serves those afflicted through the spectrum from early diagnosis to the end including Hospice services.

BPI is a private non-profit organization and therefore they can tailor to suit the needs of their attendees. Faculty and staff include Medical Nurses, Social Workers, Activities Professionals and Cooks for their private kitchen. Ratio of the staff is 1 to 5; State average is 1 to 7.

Tom Jacobs stated this is an amazing facility.

Ms. Wichlac continued by discussing funding for their facility. The majority comes from Medicaid and Veteran's Administration. The Town in the past has voted by ballot to contribute some funding to their agency. BPI has also partnered with other organizations such as Council on Aging. Lastly they conduct fundraising and apply for grants, as well as receive donations.

Anyone is eligible to attend and costs are often charged on a sliding scale. On average BPI serves 45-50 Adults per day. Seventy percent of those attendees are from the Bennington and North Bennington area.

Michael Keane asked if they were any plans to expand their current facility. Ms. Wichlac stated they hope to raise funds in the future to finish the lower level. This would add 8,000 sqft to their facility.

Jeanie Jenkins stated she works for CCV (Community College of Vermont) and thanked BPI for their great internship opportunities over the years.

Jeanne Conner discussed with Ms. Wichlac the benefits of a program like BPI instead of becoming a resident of a nursing home. Attendees not only receive the social aspect but also receive the extra incentives and challenges to push themselves to achieve.

Mr. Keane asked if they are certified and how often is that reviewed. Ms. Wichlac noted they are certified by the State of Vermont. Each year they undergo inspections from both the Veteran's Administration and the Council on Aging.

Jim Carroll thanked BPI for what they did for his Mother several years ago. He then suggested having CAT-TV produce a piece showing what they actually do at their facility.

Tom Jacobs thanked Ms. Wichlac and BPI and wished them many more years of success.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

The Manager handed out a budget packet to the Select Board members for their review. He noted at this time two budget meetings have been scheduled for Saturday January 7th and January 14th at the Bennington Firehouse from 8:00am-12:00pm.

Citizen Survey results are expected to be released at the next regularly scheduled Select Board meeting, January 9th, 2017. A citizen forum would then be scheduled for further discussion with the community.

Tom Jacobs stated the next big discussion for the Select board would then be the charter review. He would like to have (9) citizens serve on a commission for this review. It will be a 6-8 month commitment with possibly 1-2 meetings per month.

Donald Campbell, Michael Keane, & Jim Carroll wished the public Happy & Safe Holidays.

The Manager wished Jeanne Conner a Happy Birthday.

Tom Jacobs stated there was an unexpected need for Executive Session to discuss a real estate matter.

Motion: Michael Keane moved and Jim Carroll seconded a motion finding that an Executive Session be held on a real estate matter and that premature general public knowledge of either of those matters would place persons involved at a substantial disadvantage. Motion passed unanimously

Respectfully submitted,

Linda E. Bermudez
Secretary