

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

MONDAY, MAY 08, 2017

MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Tom Jacobs; Jim Carroll; Jeanne Conner; Jeannie Jenkins; Donald Campbell; Chad Gordon; Carson Thurber

Absent: None

ALSO PRESENT: Stuart Hurd, Town Manager; Dan Monks, Zoning Administrator & Assistant Town Manager; Michael McDonough, Community Development Director; Linda E. Bermudez – Secretary; (16) Citizens

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

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

2. CONSENT AGENDA (A-C)

A) Minutes – April 24, 2017

B) Warrants

C) 2017 Liquor License Renewals

There were no questions.

MOTION: Donald Campbell motioned and Jeanne Conner seconded to accept and approve the Minutes of April 24, 2017 as well as the warrants and Liquor License Applications/Renewals as submitted. Motion passed unanimously

D) Proclamation – Emergency Services Week
Donald Campbell read the proclamation.

MOTION: Carson Thurber motioned and Jeannie Jenkins seconded to accept and approve the Emergency Services Week Proclamation. Motion passed unanimously

Tom Jacobs thanked Bennington Rescue Squad for all that they do. Forrest Weyan invited the Select Board and the public to the Rescue Squad's headquarters on McKinley Street on May 22nd, 2017 at 11:00am for a big announcement

3. CITIZENS

Tom Jacobs stated there was now a new sign in sheet for citizens to speak. This will allow for better follow-up once issue has been discussed. He reminded the public that respect should be given in each direction of any discussion.

No citizens spoke this evening.

4. YOUTH APPRECIATION DAY PROCLAMATION AND PRESENTATION

Michael McDonough introduced the three key organizers for Youth Appreciation Day. This year it will be held at Willow Park on May 20th, 2017 from 12:00pm – 4:00pm.

Elyse Belarge, Rachel Newton and Rebecca Raymond stepped forward to complete the presentation. Ms. Belarge noted the event is free to everyone and is the organization's 5th year in doing so. There will be live music, vendors, food and games. There are over (20) organizations involved in the day's events including the Town, UCS and TAM. Green Mountain Bus services has agreed to provide bus service to and from the event. Children will ride free, adults will pay a reduced rate.

Ms. Belarge stated there was still room and a need for volunteers.

Jim Carroll applauded their efforts and suggested they engage the younger students to gain enthusiasm and loyalty at an early age.

Jeanne Conner stated there is a lot more buzz this year about the event. Job well done. Collaboration is key.

Carson Thurber stated there was a great list of participating organizations. He would like the public to be made more aware of them. It was suggested to make the list part of the minutes. It will also be posted to the Town's website.

Jeannie Jenkins agreed it is an impressive list of organizations.

D) Proclamation – Youth Appreciation Week

Jim Carroll read the proclamation.

MOTION: Donald Campbell motioned and Jim Carroll seconded to accept and approve the Youth Appreciation Week Proclamation. Motion passed unanimously

5. TIF DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

Dan Monks presented. The Manager noted that the legislature reconvenes later this week. It is expected that some sort of TIF legislation will be passed. The Town would like to be prepared and first in line.

Mr. Monks encouraged the Board to be proactive on this and authorize an agreement with White & Burke to develop a TIF District. The proposal will have three phases. Phase I is a *Feasibility Analysis*. It will develop the physical boundaries of the district, estimate the cost of the infrastructure improvements, analyze debt affordability, finance options, and bonds etc. If it still makes sense, then we would move to Phase II.

Phase II would be to develop strategies and timelines. They would then be presented to the public and the Select Board for adoption. If adopted by the Select Board it would be put out to voter approval. If the voters approved it then goes to VEPSE for review.

Phase III would involve the actual bonding for the infrastructure improvements and implementation.

Tom Jacobs asked about the costs. Mr. Monks stated Phase I would cost approximately \$15,000 and Phase II would cost approximately \$10,000. Those monies would come from the *Economic Development Fund* which consists of Federal Grant money. There would be no cost to the taxpayer. The timeframe for Phase I is expected to be (90) days and Phase II could take up to six months.

Jeannie Jenkins asked about the Bond in Phase II. Mr. Monks stated there would be no rush to go to bond if approved. It would be advisable to bond somewhere between 1-7 years from time of approval.

Donald Campbell stated after attending the Putnam Redevelopment Group presentation he feels this (TIF District designation) should be high priority for the Town. Dan Monks noted that although the Putnam Group may be incorporated in the development of the TIF District it would be much larger than just that area/project. There would be significant infrastructure improvements with no negative impact on the tax payer. Seventy-five percent of the new tax money generated by the new development would remain in Bennington instead of being sent upstate to the Education Fund.

Carson Thurber asked about the history of the agency this proposal would be signed with. Mr. Monks stated they have done all the TIF Districts in the State of Vermont and been very successful. They have high level of experience.

MOTION: Donald Campbell motioned and Jim Carroll seconded to authorize the signing of the TIF District Development proposal. Motion passed unanimously

6. SeVeds BOARD ACTION

Michael McDonough recounted a recommendation from the Southern Vermont Economic Development Zone Committee in 2015 that encouraged cross-county economic development. It is important to break down the barriers of rivalry between counties. They recommended creating a CEDS (Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy). Windham County began their process in 2010 named SeVeds (Southeastern Vermont Economic Development Strategy). This is required to be updated this year.

A Regional Economic Development working group (RED) was formed under the BCRC (Bennington County Regional Commission). They were asked to consider options for a CEDS that included Bennington County and Windham County. They recently unanimously approved to request SeVeds include Bennington County in their updated strategy for a two-county CEDS. On April 27th SeVeds voted in favor of the proposal.

An \$80,000 implantation grant will be applied for (late May 2017) for the expanded CEDS. This will require a \$40,000 commitment from each of the two counties in cash and in-kind services.

Tom Jacobs thanked BCRC for their efforts.

Chad Gordon agreed and counties should be working together for economic growth. We are not rivals. Tourists and others can attend events or shop in both counties in a day or a weekend. There's no reason they should have to choose. The team colors should be red, white and blue.

7. CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

Tom Jacobs drafted a simple application for the committee. Four questions to help the process such as, why the applicant is interested in joining the committee and which part of the Charter they believe needs the most work. The Manager stated it would be important to have the recommendations from this committee by October if the public were to vote on the changes in March of 2018.

The Board continued to discuss how many member would be suitable. Most agreed (7) members would be ideal but there is an option for (9) if the Board decided. Once the applications are reviewed members of the Charter Committee would be chosen by majority vote from the Board.

Jeanne Conner suggested making the Charter available for review prior to application process so applicants could understand the commitment they would need to make.

The Manager stated the Town would assist the committee by offering different resources such as access to the Town's Counsel and Administrative assistance. The application will be made available as soon as possible via the Town's website, local media etc. If enough applications are received by the next regularly scheduled Select Board meeting (5/22/17) then the committee's first meeting will be scheduled for first part of June. If there are not enough viable candidates, the application deadline will be extended. The Board agreed to this timeline.

8. MANAGER'S REPORT

The Manager reviewed the Select Board's decision at budget time to approve the purchase of a vehicle/body camera system for the Police Department. At this time, the lease/purchase agreement needs to be signed.

Motion: Donald Campbell moved and Jim Carroll seconded a motion to waive the reading of resolution and authorize the Chair to sign the Lease/Purchase Agreement for a vehicle/body camera system for the Police Department as presented. Motion passed unanimously

There are currently (4) applicants for the Housing Board including Sharyn Brush. The Manager suggested only interviewing the new applicants (not the incumbents). Tom Jacobs asked the Manager to come up with a few suggested dates for interviews and the Board will consult their individual schedules.

The State of Vermont came to Bennington recently for to present an update on the PFOA situation. At this time St. Gobain and the State disagree on the responsible party for any contamination East of the railroad Right-Of-Way. They do however agree that St. Gobain is responsible for the contamination West of the railroad Right-Of-Way. Even a partial settlement at this time would allow for construction to begin in fall of 2017. The design should have final approval in June.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

Jeanne Conner wanted to recognize a recent article in the Bennington Banner stating that Bennington has been cited as third in the nation of small communities with a vibrant arts scene.

Tom Jacobs asked about the pedestrian crossing sign at Hillside Street and South Street. The Manager was unaware that it was missing. He will have the staff look into this.

Donald Campbell thanked all of the volunteers who participated in Green Up Day. He also announced the Farmer's Market will move outside again on the Riverwalk Park (near Bennington Station Restaurant) Saturdays 10:00am – 1:00pm.

Chad Gordon announced a joint musical event at Mount Anthony Union High School that includes local students and the Cedar Grove High School from New Jersey. It will take place on May 19th, 2017.

Carson Thurber thanked the volunteers who worked with the Bennington Area Trail System (BATS) event at Southern Vermont College (SVC). Over one hundred people attended.

Tom Jacobs recognized the North Branch Street parking lot for the White Rocks Trail was mostly complete. Dan Monks stated the Green Mountain Club (GMC) would be coming in June to install a trail head kiosk. Mr. Jacobs asked if we could coordinate with them for a ribbon cutting during that time. It is a local asset that should be celebrated.

There was no other business this evening

Tom Jacobs stated there was no need for Executive Session.

Motion: Jim Carroll moved and Carson Thurber seconded a motion to close the meeting. Motion passed unanimously

Respectfully submitted,

Linda E. Bermudez
Secretary