

1 **BENNINGTON SELECT BOARD**

2 **BENNINGTON FIRE FACILITY**

3 **130 RIVER STREET**

4 **BENNINGTON, VERMONT 05201**

5 **DECEMBER 10, 2018**

6 **MINUTES**

7 **SELECT BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Thomas Jacobs-Chair; Donald Campbell-Vice-Chair; Jim Carroll;  
8 Jeanne Conner; Chad Gordon; Carson Thurber and Jeannie Jenkins.

9 **SELECT BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** None.

10 **ALSO PRESENT:** Stuart Hurd-Town Manager; Daniel Monks-Planning Director; Zirwat Chowdhury-  
11 Community Development Director; Joel Lentzner; Jennifer Fels-Blueprint Director; Thomas Dee-CEO of SVMC;  
12 Kristi Cross-Future Blueprint Director; Kate Lamson-Public Defenders Office; Chad Schmidt-Sheriff; Leitha  
13 Cipriano-Restorative Justice; Jason Dolmetsch-MSK Engineering; Tim Raymond-State of Vermont Drinking Water  
14 and Ground Water Protection Division; Larry Gates; RJ Joly; William Stewart; John Hale; Michelle Alexander; Will  
15 Shepard; Jack Hurley; Nancy White; Jerry Byrd; 50 citizens; Bennington Banner; Mike Cutler-CAT-TV and Nancy  
16 H. Lively-Secretary.

17 At 6:00pm, Chair Thomas Jacobs called the meeting to order.

18 **1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

19 The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all present.

20 **2. CONSENT AGENDA**

21 **A. MINUTES - NOVEMBER 26, 2018**

22 **B. WARRANTS**

23 *Donald Campbell moved and Carson Thurber seconded to approve the Consent Agenda*  
24 *amended as follows.*

25 *Line 144, change "Council's" to "Counsel's".*

26 *The motion carried with Donald Campbell and Jim Carroll abstaining.*

27 **3. CITIZEN PUBLIC COMMENTS**

28 Mr. Jacobs announced that the Chamber of Commerce had recognized three individuals from  
29 our region for going above and beyond in their jobs, industry or community. They are Paul Carraccio-  
30 Manchester Business Associates, Bill Colvin-BCRC and John Shannahan, Bennington Downtown  
31 Alliance.

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33 Mr. Jacobs clarified that the YMCA is not taking over the Bennington Recreation Center. The  
34 Town has an agreement with the Y for Jessie Rumlow to act as Interim Director of the Rec Center for 12  
35 months during which time an assessment and evaluation of the Rec Center will take place. Ownership  
36 is not being transferred.

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38 William Stewart asked about the relocation of the Morgan Spring pickup point to Depot Street,  
39 and Mr. Jacobs answered that the relocation isn't definite at this time because the agreement has  
40 stipulations in it that we don't know yet if they will be agreed to.

41 Mr. Hurd added that the Development Review Board has granted preliminary approval to the  
42 relocation to Depot Street across from Johnny Suds with a second hearing to take place soon, so "that  
43 relocation is moving forward".

44 Mr. Stewart feels that the residents of Bennington should be the direct recipients of Morgan  
45 Springs - especially because of the "PFOA crisis" - and would like a public hearing on this before March.  
46 Mr. Jacobs stated that the Board will take this under advisement.

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48 John Hale noted that, on November 20<sup>th</sup>, he received the award letter for the Community Block  
49 Grant for \$650,000, and thanked everyone who supported the application. This is the first one for a  
50 proprietary undertaking in the State.

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52 John Hale feels that the relocation of the water transfer station across from Johnny Suds  
53 jeopardizes the safety of his employees and customers, and is not "forward thinking" in finding a  
54 solution to the trailer truck traffic going through town.

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56 Michelle Alexander, a representative of the 350.org activist group, spoke on the single use  
57 plastic bag issue and cited statistics to support the elimination of them. On January 14, 2019, Ms.  
58 Alexander will be doing a power point presentation illustrating in more detail the detrimental effect of  
59 the bags to humans, animals, and the environment.

60 Mr. Hurd stated that the Solid Waste Alliance has developed a countywide process, however,  
61 each community needs to adopt its own ordinance on the issue.

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63 Jack Hurley feels that we should be environmentally friendly but doesn't agree with totally  
64 banning or imposing a fee for the single use plastic bags. Mr. Hurley also cited statistics to support his  
65 point of view noting that our focus should be more on plastic bottles instead of plastic bags.

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67 Will Shepard, a student at Bennington College, spoke in support of banning the plastic bags,  
68 and even though the students will not be in town on January 14<sup>th</sup>, they will be collecting signatures and  
69 be represented by one of their professors.

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71 Nancy White was disappointed that poverty continues to rise while the non-profits - many of  
72 whom were created to help to decrease the poverty in Bennington - have requested \$1M from the  
73 taxpayers. All of this spending is not creating any jobs. People can move to Bennington and receive  
74 subsidies immediately, whereas, the taxpayers have been supporting the Town for 30 years.

75 **4. DOWNTOWN BENNINGTON ALLIANCE - MARKETING PROPOSAL**

76 Joel Lentzner stated the Downtown Bennington Alliance (DBA) has been promoting the  
77 Downtown with the following:

- 78 • The Bennington@Noon Series features local small businesses in their stores or restaurants with  
79 a 2-3 minute segment on Facebook.
- 80 • Since 10/4/18, 32 videos have been made that received 143,000 impressions and were  
81 watched for 603 hours.
- 82 • The request is for **\$500** to pay for "boosts" to the Bennington@Noon Series. Boosting would  
83 raise the viewing by ~10 times that of a post that is not boosted.
- 84 • There will be another series that will roll out in March that will promote the businesses in a  
85 different way. This will be our third series.
- 86 • The other request for funds is **\$250** for our second annual Holiday Raffle Promotion. This  
87 year's grand prize is a 12-day Caribbean cruise for two on the Queen Mary 2 that is valued over  
88 \$5,000.
- 89 • Customers get 1 raffle ticket for every \$10 spent at participating businesses.
- 90 • This has been covered on WTEN.

91 Board comments/questions:

92 Ms. Conner: Are the businesses participating in the Holiday Raffle the ones in the videos, and Mr.  
93 Lentzner answered, yes, for the most part.

94 Mr. Carroll: Asked for a further explanation of the boosts, and Mr. Lentzner responded that they put  
95 you at the top of peoples Facebook feeds. Mr. Carroll commented that he has heard from local  
96 business owners that they are supportive of this project and have experienced additional business  
97 because of it.

98 Mr. Campbell: Enjoyed the videos, but questions that the taxpayers should be paying for individuals  
99 advertising. In general, Mr. Campbell feels that a policy should be developed to field these smaller  
100 requests so they are a part of the budget.

101 Ms. Jenkins: Also enjoyed the videos, and asked about the DBA membership. Mr. Lentzner answered  
102 that the membership consists of 67 members with dues at \$1 with members often donating addition  
103 amounts. The benefit of becoming a member is that Downtown, as a whole, is promoted, as well as,  
104 each individual business. The DBA approach to promotion works well with the event promotion of the  
105 BBC.

106 Mr. Gordon: Also enjoyed the videos and was pleased to see Bennington on WTEN.

107 Mr. Jacobs: Asked why the DBA needed to come to the Town for \$750 instead of supporting that from  
108 their membership, and Mr. Lentzner stated that their request for \$4,500 in the spring had been turned  
109 down because the BBC was granted all of the Downtown District money. Because of that, we had to  
110 cancel the Social Media plan that the \$4,500 would have paid for. We have had to help ourselves and  
111 are asking the Town for a small contribution to help us, as well.

112 Mr. Jacobs: Feels that we should be talking about a comprehensive marketing plan for the whole town,  
113 and Mr. Lentzner agreed, but this type of cohesiveness won't take place in the next six months.

114 ***Chad Gordon moved and Carson Thurber seconded to approve the \$750.00 funding request***  
115 ***for the Downtown Bennington Alliance as presented.***

116 Ms. Conner stated that this is a great idea, however, everyone with a great idea can't expect  
117 the Town to fund it. This is not an appropriate request.

118 Mr. Thurber acknowledge that Mr. Lentzner is not asking for very much money, but the Board  
119 can better judge Town finances when requests are presented as part of the budget.

120 Mr. Carroll noted that it is the Board's role to encourage small businesses to come to them with  
121 these requests because we don't presently have a marketing plan and we "need all oars pulling in the  
122 same direction" to get positive results.

123 Ms. Jenkins stated that we do need a process for good ideas, however, with the varying  
124 amounts of money taken in from the members with dues and donations, the DBA probably has the  
125 \$750.00 they are requesting. We don't know that because we have no financial information and need  
126 more documentation to support this request. "It feels muddy."

127 Mr. Gordon agrees that we need a process, but we don't have one now and shouldn't punish  
128 people for something that doesn't exist. It is a small amount of money and we should do anything we  
129 can to get people spending money in the Downtown.

130 Mr. Jacobs doesn't see the benefit to the whole community, as attractive as it is.

131 ***The motion failed with Carson Thurber, Jim Carroll and Chad Gordon in favor and Jeanne Conner,***  
132 ***Tom Jacobs, Donald Campbell and Jeannie Jenkins against.***

133 Mr. Jacobs invited Mr. Lentzner to do a presentation during budget discussions in January.

134 **5. OPIATE RESPONSE PLAN DISCUSSION**

135 Jennifer Fels, Blueprint Director, stated that Peter Welch addressed a large group of people and  
136 a commitment was then developed by leaders of various services within the community to develop an  
137 Opioid Response Plan as follows:

138 ➤ *The Goals of our Leadership Team are:*

139 1. Establish ourselves in the community as one of governance, organization and financial  
140 support for opioid use prevention, recovery, treatment and criminal justice.

141 2. Reduce duplication and coordinate resources, services and supports in Bennington  
142 County regarding opioid prevention, treatment, recovery and criminal justice.

143 3. Understand, organize, educate and provide resources for existing programs for opioid  
144 use reduction efforts.

145 ➤ *Long Term Goal:* Form a not-for-profit 501c3 organization to serve as the organizing entity to  
146 address a coordinated, multi-organizational effort to combat the Opioid substance abuse crisis.

147 ➤ Our Mission Statement is "A Bennington County Partnership using an integrated approach to  
148 improve quality of life by reducing the adverse effects of opioid use in our community".

149 ➤ Our Vision is "We envision a united Bennington County working together in a compassionate,  
150 inclusive and comprehensive manner in order to achieve a healthier community".

151 ➤ There are 14 organizations that are part of the Leadership Team that provide the current  
152 programs and services for Prevention, Treatment, Recovery, Criminal Justice.

153 ➤ Our Values are Commitment to a Common Goal; Equity; Stewardship; Synergy; Mutually  
154 Supportive; and Non-Partisan.

155 ➤ Our Immediate Priorities - within 6 months - are to hire a Health Service Area Project  
156 Coordinator for grant writing and to have a web-based Central Resource Center.

157 ➤ Our Medium Term Priorities - within 3 years - is to build a Recovery Campus that is certified by  
158 the National Alliance for Recovery Residences (NARR) and Ken Sigsbury from Turning Point has  
159 a budget in place for the Recovery Housing. We also want to build a Community Center that  
160 provides safe spaces for youth/family activity.

161 ➤ Opioid substance abuse is a chronic disease with the relapse rate the same as with diabetes,  
162 respiratory diseases, or congestive heart failure.

163 ➤ Prevention services to come in 2019 are the Syringe Services Program, Safe Spaces for Youth  
164 Recreation (Community Center) and the implementation of Blueprint screening, brief  
165 intervention and navigation to treatment. Some recreation activities could be provided by Rise  
166 Vermont, the Splash Pad, the collaboration with UCS at the Rec Center, and safe activities for  
167 families.

168 ➤ Treatment services to come in 2019 are a Bennington HUB - which will encourage primary care  
169 doctors to dispense treatments - initiation of buprenorphine (Suboxone) in the Emergency

170 Department, Subida Health with navigation to treatment within 48 hours and a Spoke Program  
171 in Manchester. There are stringent federal rules that would take a year to follow to be able to  
172 set up a methadone clinic.

- 173 ➤ We will be meeting with a grant writer next week to solicit funding for our projects.
- 174 ➤ All law enforcement agencies will conduct 'business as usual' but now each officer is carrying  
175 Narcan should someone have overdosed.
- 176 ➤ The Sheriff's Department is now partnering with Turning Point Center to encourage people to  
177 go to the Emergency Room as we have no authority to do so. Work is also being done with our  
178 Representatives to get some legislation in place to change that.
- 179 ➤ Recovery Housing will be able to keep the addicts in town where they will have family, friends  
180 and community support as they go through the healing process.
- 181 ➤ People need to be referred to Drug Court by the State's Attorney's Office and they haven't  
182 done so yet.

183 Jerry Byrd noted that we could do a better job of helping people and thanked everyone for their  
184 efforts.

185 The Board thanked everyone involved for their efforts, as well.

## 186 **6. BENNINGTON DOWNTOWN ALLIANCE - MARKETING PLAN**

187 This agenda item has been moved to the January 14, 2019 meeting.

## 188 **7. LEAD REDUCTION GRANT - FINAL REPORT**

189 Jason Dolmetsch, P.E., MSK Engineering and Design, Inc., stated that this is a public hearing  
190 project narrative to date for the Lead Reduction Grant that the Town received. This grant covered  
191 mapping of the lead service lines, funding strategies for a replacement program and public outreach.

192 Tim Raymond, State of Vermont Drinking Water and Ground Water Protection Division, stated  
193 that there are only 10 water systems in the State with a population of over 10,000. Most service fewer  
194 than 350 year round residents and they receive most of the federal and state funding due to their  
195 economy of scale. There is no amount of lead that is good for the human body. Bennington has been  
196 implementing water corrosion treatment control at the plant since 1978 so the town lines are lead  
197 free. The issue that we're dealing with now are the privately owned water service lines going to  
198 people's homes. The work on this that has been done in Bennington will potentially be used as a  
199 model throughout the State. The Town is in compliance, is actively in the process of correcting the  
200 issue with the grant, and is not at risk.

201 Mr. Dolmetsch shared the following with the Board:

- 202 ✓ The part of the service line that is owned by the customer is between the water shut off and  
203 the house. This requires customer participation in removing these lines.
- 204 ✓ Mapping was done with the Town employee information from 2016 and archive books that had  
205 all of the service lines that were installed between 1882 and 1983.

- 206 ✓ The last lead service lines were installed in Bennington by 1929 and the federal ban on lead  
207 service lines was in 1985.
- 208 ✓ 50% of the lines that were researched have already been replaced.
- 209 ✓ We have estimated that 100-627 service lines have lead on town and customer sides of the line  
210 and 267-962 have lead on customer side only.
- 211 ✓ Our “best guess” is that there are possibly ~1,500 of the service lines out of 3,600 that may  
212 contain lead.
- 213 ✓ “The scale of the problem is between big and really big.”
- 214 ✓ There will be a color coded lead service line map on an interactive page website as part of the  
215 Town’s website tomorrow for people to utilize.
- 216 ✓ The State provided \$80,000 for the grant with the Town providing a \$20,000 match.
- 217 ✓ Ways to minimize lead consumption are to flush the lines, drink cold water, install a lead  
218 removing filter, and lastly, to replace the line. If someone desires, water tests for lead are  
219 available for \$15.
- 220 ✓ If you flush the lines until you feel a temperature change from warm to cold, you will have  
221 removed most of the lead in the water. For an average household, this is from 8-15 liters -  
222 similar to a load of wash or dishes - and most single family households are on the flat rate for  
223 water.
- 224 ✓ The applications haven’t been released yet, but there is some EPA funding available which  
225 Bennington should be well positioned to be approved for. The match amounts are unknown at  
226 this time.
- 227 ✓ There is also SRF loans available that would need to be paid back. There is no information on  
228 these yet.
- 229 ✓ Also, the Town may be able to allocate some of their Capital Improvement dollars to loan to the  
230 residents for payback over a period of time.

231 **8. 209 PLEASANT VALLEY ROAD - BID DISCUSSION**

232 At the last meeting, Mr. Thurber had hoped that more publicity on the sale of the 209 Pleasant  
233 Valley Road property would spark additional interest, and that we should open the bid process up  
234 again. He feels that multiple acres (3.29 acres) on a nice road is worth more than the bid of \$12,500,  
235 which was the only bid that was received.

236 There are people present that are interested in the property that will “remove the eye sore”  
237 and make it livable for a couple that are getting married.

238 Mr. Carroll noted that we should do a better job of promoting our tax sales.

239 Mr. Campbell stated that he feels that we should “unload this one”, however, “fair policy”  
240 should be when we have to dispose of an asset, we come up with a minimum bid, put out an RFP, and  
241 if we don’t have a bid that reaches our minimum, the property automatically goes out to auction.

242 The tabled motion from the November 26, 2018 meeting is:

243 *Jeanne Conner moved and Chad Gordon seconded to accept the bid of \$12,500.00 from James*  
244 *Horst for the 209 Pleasant Valley Road property. The motion failed unanimously.*

245 *Donald Campbell moved and Chad Gordon seconded that, when disposing of assets, the Town*  
246 *would set a minimum bid and consider the bids that meet or exceed the minimum bid. If the*  
247 *minimum bid is not met, then we send the property to public auction without reserve.*

248 Mr. Hurd will report back to the Board the result of the public auction of the 209 Pleasant  
249 Valley Road at the January 14, 2019 meeting.

250 *The motion carried unanimously.*

## 251 **9. MANAGER'S REPORT**

252 Mr. Hurd circulated the Certificate of Approval for a Salvage Yard operation that is in  
253 compliance.

254 Mr. Hurd reported that Bennington Project Independence is applying to purchase shares in a  
255 community solar project yet to be identified with USDA Rural Development and the application  
256 requires municipal support.

257 *Jim Carroll moved and Donald Campbell seconded to support the Bennington Project*  
258 *Independence USDA Rural Development application to purchase shares in a community solar project*  
259 *and authorize the Town Manager to sign on behalf of the Board. The motion carried unanimously.*

## 260 **10. OTHER BUSINESS**

261 Ms. Conner congratulated Old Castle for their production of The Curious Savage last week.

262 Mr. Thurber reminded everyone that the Town is accepting business plans for the two town  
263 garages until January 1, 2019.

264 Mr. Carroll will be having 'Coffee with Jim' on Saturday to meet with his constituents and to  
265 discuss some legislation that he is working on. One piece of legislation is pertaining to the fact that  
266 child care in Vermont costs \$14,000/child and another is to keep and attract teachers and nurses to  
267 Vermont.

268 Mr. Campbell noted that the BCRC was able to bring in \$100,000 of the \$600,000 building  
269 community grants in the State to Bennington County. Also, kudos to staff for their work on the Waste  
270 Water Treatment Facility that saved the Town \$1M.

271 Mr. Gordon stated that Boys Basketball is tomorrow night and Wrestling is on Friday night.

272 Mr. Jacobs asked when the Survey Report will be available to the public, and Mr. Hurd  
273 answered early January.

## 274 **11. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

275        **A. CONTRACT**

276            *At 7:40pm, Donald Campbell moved and Carson Thurber seconded that the meeting was*  
277 *adjourned finding that an Executive Session be held on a Contract as premature public knowledge*  
278 *would place a person involved in the subject matter at a substantial disadvantage. The motion*  
279 *carried unanimously.*

280    Respectfully submitted, Nancy H. Lively, Secretary