

1 **BENNINGTON SELECT BOARD**

2 **BENNINGTON FIRE FACILITY**

3 **130 RIVER STREET**

4 **BENNINGTON, VERMONT 05201**

5 **APRIL 22, 2019**

6 **MINUTES**

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

9 **SELECT BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** Jim Carroll.

10 **ALSO PRESENT:** Stuart Hurd-Town Manager; Daniel Monks-Assistant Town Manager and Planning Director;  
11 Shannon Barsotti-Community Development Director; Jessica Rumlow-YMCA Interim Director; Ted Cutsopics;  
12 Alicia Holden; Tim Payne; Amy Dobson; Chris Murphy; Rose Talbot; Andrea Malinowski; Nancy White; Dr.  
13 Richard Dundas; David Durfee; 15 citizens; Bennington Banner; Mike Cutler-CAT-TV and Nancy H. Lively-  
14 Secretary.

15 At 6:02pm, Chair Donald Campbell called the meeting to order.

16 **1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

17 The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all present.

18 **2. CONSENT AGENDA**

19 **A. MINUTES - APRIL 8, 2019**

20 **B. WARRANTS**

21 *Carson Thurber moved and Jeannie Jenkins seconded to approve the Consent Agenda*  
22 *amended as follows:*

23 Lines 13 and 154 - change "Beven" to "Bevin"

24 Lines 85 and 96 - change "ordnance" to "ordinance"

25 Lines 181, 188, 192, and 200 - change "Bios" to "Bias"

26 Line 47 - change "decide" to "design"

27 *The motion carried unanimously.*

28 **C. PROCLAMATION - FOR MOTHERS AND OTHERS FOR PEACE**

29 The Proclamation was read by Jeannie Jenkins and circulated for signatures.

30 **3. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

31 The following residents had comments about the tree removal and ravine by the Elm  
32 Street/Dewey Street intersection:

33 Ted Cutsopics - gave the petition entitled 'Replacement of the Tree/Bush Privacy Cover on  
34 Dewey Street' that 17 residents had signed concerning the removal of trees to create the existing  
35 ravine to the Board. The Town had been solicited to remove some dead, overhanging branches,  
36 however, the extent of the work beyond that was done without the residents being notified in  
37 advance. The request is that the Town remedy the situation in a timely manner in collaboration with  
38 the neighborhood residents that have been impacted.

39 Alicia Holden - 10 years ago the sidewalk on Dewey Street was to be removed, the  
40 neighborhood was aware this was going to happen and were able to save the sidewalk. The ravine  
41 project has now removed that sidewalk, and Ms. Holden would like to have it replaced.

42 Tim Payne - was one of the persons who requested the removal of the dead trees and was  
43 surprised to see the creation of the ravine when the dead trees remained. He feels that the neighbors  
44 and the Town can reach a resolution to re-establish the privacy that they had before. Mr. Payne also  
45 reiterated his concern about the dangerous Elm Street/Dewey Street intersection and requested  
46 statistics to support the amount of traffic that goes through there. Mr. Hurd stated that he is obtaining  
47 the cost of putting a 4-way light at the intersection and noted that we have to work with the owners of  
48 the poles, Green Mountain Power, to do that.

49 Amy Dobson - spoke to how the ravine project was handled and how future projects could be  
50 handled better.

51 Chris Murphy - also requested the removal of dead trees and spoke to the amenities that the  
52 ravine project has eliminated.

53 The residents also mentioned the courtesy and efficiency of the Town crew doing the work.  
54 Mr. Hurd will work on a solution for the neighborhood.

55 **4. BENNINGTON RECREATION CENTER - ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT**

56 Jessica Rumlow, Interim Director of the Berkshire Family YMCA (BFYMCA) did the following  
57 presentation:

- 58 • The Management Agreement was amended to bring the Senior Center under the umbrella of  
59 the Recreation Center.
- 60 • The amendment has provided the opportunity to elevate two part-time town employees and  
61 move a full-time employee to a new role giving 2 full-time positions under BFYMCA and an  
62 additional staff member at the Senior Center.
- 63 • The Senior Center serves adults 50 and over.
- 64 • The BFYMCA has 3 areas of focus - Youth Development, Healthy Living and Social Responsibility.

- 65 • The Transition Committee listens to where we are at and advise on the transition. It is made up  
66 of community members, such as, a long-time Senior Center volunteer, the President of the  
67 Marauders Swim Team, 3 long-time Rec Center users, 1 from the school system, Rec Center  
68 staff, and Town staff. UCS, although not a member of the Committee, attends the meetings to  
69 voice where they are at with Phase 1 of their project at the Rec Center.
- 70 • Youth Development -
  - 71 ➤ Kids Night Out - began on March 1<sup>st</sup> - offers parents to do something for themselves  
72 while their children 7-12 have the opportunity to swim, enjoy pizza (donated by  
73 Ramunto's) and engage in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) for  
74 \$5/participant.
  - 75 ➤ T-Ball - to begin May 6<sup>th</sup> - for children 4-7, two days/week.
  - 76 ➤ All Sports Program - for 4 weeks each in July and August - introduction to a variety of  
77 sports, Outdoor Adventure including hiking and STEM (Science, Technology,  
78 Engineering, and Math) for the non-sport youth.
  - 79 ➤ Camp Green Mountain - to begin over the summer - at a reduced rate due to the Town  
80 subsidizing the program plus parents can apply for an additional 25% off through the  
81 BFYMCA Financial Scholarship Program. Lunch is provided for children in grades 6-8  
82 with before and after care for working parents running from 7:00am and ending at  
83 5:30pm. This is a 6-week program, Monday thru Friday.
  - 84 ➤ Additional programs on the horizon are basketball, 3-on-3 basketball tournament,  
85 kickball, tennis, and volleyball.
- 86 • Healthy Living -
  - 87 ➤ The 'Purple Room' downstairs will provide room for body weight training and stretching  
88 and we have applied for a grant through Rise VT to help pay for flooring and equipment.
  - 89 ➤ We are in need of cardio machines but currently have no place to put them.
  - 90 ➤ Fitness on Demand provides over 7,000 workouts with virtual classes to help utilize the  
91 limited space.
  - 92 ➤ Silver Sneakers for people 55+ is offered and may be covered by insurance so there is no  
93 cost to the participant.
  - 94 ➤ The swim schedule has been revised to offer lap swimmers the opportunity to swim  
95 while other programs are taking place.
  - 96 ➤ The Health and Wellness Director and Aquatics Manager are working on getting Tai Chi  
97 certified.
  - 98 ➤ Adult Kick Ball will be held throughout the summer in collaboration with Kids Night Out.
  - 99 ➤ There is a 12-week Cancer Survivor Program for all cancer survivors.
- 100 • Social Responsibility -
  - 101 ➤ We partner with several community agencies, such as RiseVT, Catamount Connections,  
102 SVSU, SASH, Council on Aging, Crescent Manor, UCS, and Ramunto's Pizza.
  - 103 ➤ Events as a result of these partnerships are -  
104 ✓ Take a Walk in the Park and Scavenger Hunt (RiseVT)

- 105 ✓ Tabled at Monument Elementary School's Camp Fair (SVSU)
- 106 ✓ Egg Hunt and Healthy Kids Day (UCS, Catamount Connection, and RiseVT)
- 107 ✓ 21<sup>st</sup> Century Grant proposal (SVSU)
- 108 ✓ Kids Night Out pizza (Ramunto's)
- 109 ✓ Senior Center programming (SASH, Council on Aging, and Crescent Manor)
- 110 ✓ Speaking Opportunities at the Bennington Rotary and Blueprint All Inclusive
- 111 Community Health Team Meeting
- 112 ➤ Speaker Series at the Senior Center -
  - 113 ✓ Healthier Living with Chronic Disease (6-week workshop provided by SASH)
  - 114 ✓ Healthier Relationship with Food (3 week series provided by Marlana Freitas)
  - 115 ✓ Friday YOGA (hosted by Crescent Manor)
  - 116 ✓ Bone Builders (offered consistently when the Senior Center Program Manager
  - 117 and Health and Wellness Director get certified)
  - 118 ✓ Additional trips (supported by Green Mountain Express)
  - 119 ✓ Eat Smart, Spend Smart (evidence-based program with instructor training
  - 120 assisted by SASH)
- 121 • BFYMCA and Recreation Center - Pathway Forward
- 122 • Top 3 priorities -
  - 123 ➤ 1. Recognize and create a program that will increase revenue stream:
    - 124 ✓ Licensing the Senior Center for 39 children for a School-Age Before and After
    - 125 School Programming. 7-8:30am and 3-6pm. Little impact on Senior
    - 126 Programming and within walking distance to Bennington Elementary and Sacred
    - 127 Heart.
    - 128 ✓ Expand the BFYMCA Family Reunification Program to the Bennington Recreation
    - 129 Center.
  - 130 ➤ 2. Recommend renaming the Senior Center so its availability to those as young as 50 is
  - 131 more apparent.
    - 132 ✓ Increase hours and offer more youth and adult programs in the Senior Center
    - 133 facility without interfering with the Senior Programming.
  - 134 ➤ 3. Strategize the best way to expand the fitness center to increase the amount of cardio
  - 135 equipment.
    - 136 ✓ We currently have 3 treadmills and 2 ellipticals and those are not
    - 137 accommodating the need.
    - 138 ✓ Include knocking down the wall in the director's office and storage area to
    - 139 increase space as part of the UCS Phase 1 project.
- 140 • The Transition Committee has stated that communication and transparency are a must. Ms.
- 141 Rumlow read a letter from both the BFYMCA and the Town of Bennington explaining where the
- 142 partnership is at this point to be provided to 275 residents. The hope is to be able to reach
- 143 many more people by providing this electronically on the Town's website.

144 *Board questions/comments:*

145 Mr. Scully: How is the Board able to see the comments that are being made - good and bad, and  
146 Ms. Rumlow answered that employees have a spreadsheet of wants and needs, there's a comment box  
147 at the Rec Center, and the Minutes from the Transition Committee Meeting can be put on the Town's  
148 website.

149 Ms. Conner: Was appreciative that Ms. Rumlow referred to the relationship between the  
150 BFYMCA and the Town as a 'partnership' because that's what it is, and not the inaccurate reporting in  
151 the Banner that used the word 'takeover'.

152 Ms. Conner: Asked how Ms. Rumlow is communicating everything that is going on to the  
153 community, and Ms. Rumlow responded that she has done this presentation at the Bennington Rotary  
154 and will be doing it at Blueprint, for the Bennington Young Professionals, as well as, as many other  
155 places as she can. The schedule of the presentations can be put in the Banner.

156 Mr. Thurber: Noted the improved atmosphere at the Rec Center and the importance of getting  
157 the information out to the public.

158 Ms. Jenkins: Noted the well-organized, well attended Kid's Day, and reinforced the need to  
159 publicize that the Senior Center is available to those as young as 50 because she had spoken to  
160 someone in their 50's who didn't realize he could be utilizing the activities there.

161 Ms. Jenkins: Stated that PAVE was doing the Family Reunification Program, and Ms. Rumlow  
162 responded that "it is on her radar" to reach out to them.

163 Ms. Jenkins: How will the knocking down of walls look at the Rec Center, and Ms. Rumlow  
164 suggested that that would be a question for the UCS architect when the time comes.

165 Mr. Gordon: Stated that he was glad to see that STEAM and STEM were also being offered, and  
166 not just the sports programs, and asked if individuals could sponsor children. Ms. Rumlow answered  
167 that they receive donations all of the time and the donation can be earmarked for a certain program or  
168 individual.

169 *Citizens questions/comments:*

170 Rose Talbot: Asked for an explanation of children at the Senior Center, and Ms. Rumlow  
171 explained that the children would only be in the large space before 8:30am and after 3:00pm when the  
172 senior activities are not taking place. This is just an idea that may need some tweaking. Ms. Talbot  
173 reiterated her feeling that the seniors "are being shut out" and that "everything is for the kids". Mr.  
174 Campbell added that the Board appreciates all new ideas for the community but will not be making any  
175 decisions this evening.

176 Andrea Malinowski from RiseVT: Stated what a pleasure it has been to work with Ms. Rumlow  
177 to try to increase activities for everyone in the community.

178 Nancy White: Stated that the tax payers are the ones that are paying \$600,000 for the project  
179 and have been shut out of the whole process. She also mentioned that the other agencies that the

180 BFYMCA is partnering with in the community are non-profits that the taxpayers also support, including  
181 the UCS project which is being paid for with federal dollars. These dollars are not tied to the BFYMCA  
182 being at the Rec Center. Ms. White asked about the fees that would be charged next year, and Mr.  
183 Campbell answered that that is all being worked out, however, "the Town has made a general  
184 commitment, that for the current services that people get right now, we're going to do everything we  
185 can to keep the costs where they are".

186 Mr. Hurd recapped the following:

- 187 • The Organizational Assessment with the BFYMCA is a year long process.
- 188 • The Transition Committee meets quarterly with their first meeting having been held on March  
189 27<sup>th</sup> and their second meeting to be held in June.
- 190 • We are due for a full assessment in September, and at that point, there will be  
191 recommendations that come forward that the Board will have to act on and decide how we will  
192 proceed into the following year.
- 193 • At this, our 120 day assessment, "we are moving at light speed" with programs that have  
194 already come into play and working well, including the Senior Center under the umbrella of the  
195 Rec Center.

## 196 **5. ENERGY COMMITTEE - NEEDS DISCUSSION**

197 Mr. Campbell read the first energy recommendation from the Town Plan:

198 "The Town should re-establish, maintain, and support its Municipal Energy Committee. That  
199 Committee should pursue implementation of its plan, advocate for energy conservation and renewable  
200 energy projects, and report on a regular basis to the Select Board." Mr. Campbell added that there are  
201 47 strategies in the Plan.

202 *Discussion ensued with the following comments/questions:*

203 Mr. Scully: A NorShaft Energy Committee was formed, as well as, one in Berlin and Dorset.  
204 Berlin was a municipal committee and Dorset was an independent committee, and each was successful  
205 in different ways. We need to do this as simply as possible and decide what the process will be for  
206 setting up a committee.

207 Mr. Campbell: If this becomes a committee of the Board, they will report to the Board, do what  
208 the Board asks of them, follow the Open Meeting Law, post their meetings, and post their Minutes  
209 within 5 working days of a meeting. The committee member selection would be similar to the process  
210 that was used for the Charter Review Committee.

211 Ms. Jenkins: A committee of the Board will have a charge and not be as free ranging as an  
212 independent committee would be, and she is concerned that a municipal energy committee wouldn't  
213 be what the Climate Advocates Group - who are the ones that had requested an energy committee be  
214 formed - had envisioned or would want to participate in.

215 Ms. Conner: Doesn't feel that a municipal energy committee will deter the Climate Advocates  
216 Group from continuing their work. "They are a motivated group."

217 Mr. Hurd: Is concerned that a municipal Energy Committee will create more work for staff who  
218 already have a busy schedule.

219 Mr. Monks: Added that the BCRC does have a staff person on their Energy Committee, as well  
220 as, an intern that is appointed for one year at a time.

221 David Durfee: The author of the Climate Advocates Group letter proposal, stated that all three  
222 versions are the same with varying levels of detail for the review of the Board. "This is not something  
223 that is set in stone." Most of the town energy committees that Mr. Durfee is familiar with are  
224 generally focused on "how they can save money for the town, and that is not what this energy plan is  
225 about."

226 Dr. Richard Dundas: Feels that the committee will accomplish more if it is formalized as a town  
227 committee and that it should do its own administrative work so as not to tax the town's staff.

228 ***Bill Scully moved and Jeanne Conner seconded to set up an Energy Committee of not more***  
229 ***than 10 members to pursue the implementation of the Town Plan, advocate for energy conservation***  
230 ***and renewable energy products, and report on a regular basis to the Select Board for a term of one***  
231 ***year and to establish a mission objective or plan within the first quarter that is reported to the Select***  
232 ***Board. The motion carried unanimously.***

233 Mr. Hurd stated that the request for applications for the Energy Committee will be part of the  
234 Boards and Commissions Press Release for filling upcoming open positions. After all applications have  
235 been received, the Board will then set up interviews for any new individual applying.

## 236 **6. PURCHASING POLICY - ESTABLISH REVIEW**

237 *It was the consensus of the Board to accept Jim Carroll's resignation from reviewing the*  
238 *Purchasing Policy and to have Donald Campbell, Bill Scully, and Carson Thurber now conduct the*  
239 *review.*

## 240 **7. LIQUOR LICENSES**

241 The following 2019 Liquor License Renewal Applications were circulated for signatures:

242 *2019 1<sup>st</sup> Class Renewals -*

- 243 1. Harvest Brewery (& outside consumption)
- 244 2. Miller's Toll (& outside consumption)
- 245 3. Safford Mills Inn & Café (& outside consumption)
- 246 4. Bennington Pizza House

247 5. Jensen's Restaurant  
248 2019 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Renewals -  
249 1. Buck Stop Mini Mart

250 **8. MANAGER'S REPORT**

251 Mr. Hurd read the Letter of Support for S.113 on the single use plastic bag ban and then  
252 circulated it for signatures.

253 Mr. Hurd reported that hydrant flushing will be going on for the next two weeks. If your water  
254 is discolored, run cold water until it clears. Do not run hot water.

255 Mr. Hurd stated that the town staff had received a couple of requests to remove dead trees on  
256 Elm and Dewey Streets, and took it upon themselves to clear the ravine to improve drainage. It was  
257 rather drastic, and we will be talking to an arborist on how to best recreate the screening that was  
258 previously there.

259 Mr. Hurd shared the following informational items:

- 260 • The Department of Health attended open house meetings on April 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> to answer  
261 questions relating to the upcoming PFOA construction, long term monitoring for remaining  
262 wells, and other health related questions. Construction is scheduled to begin in the northeast  
263 section of the community this summer.
- 264 • The Marketing RFP bid notice appeared in the Banner on April 16<sup>th</sup> with a due date for  
265 submissions by the end of business on May 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- 266 • Many of the natural playground elements at the Stark Street Playground will meet our insurer's  
267 standards if constructed correctly. We await the design effort and cost estimate to see how  
268 many may be installed. The Town has applied for a \$16,000 grant from AARP to assist in the  
269 construction of the walking path that can be used as part of the match for the Land and Water  
270 Conservation Grant.
- 271 • Work has begun to complete the Park at 336 Main Street and we expect the contractor for the  
272 splash pad at Merchants Park to return in May to complete this portion of the project. The CDC  
273 students will be working on the construction of the stage.
- 274 • We have received 3 unsolicited proposals for the Police Department Audit. We have sought  
275 help from the Vermont Partnership for Fairness and Diversity, a Brattleboro organization, to  
276 help us craft an RFP for the Audit. The RFP will go out to these 3 vendors, as well as, others.

277 **9. UPCOMING AGENDA**

278 Agenda items that we currently have for upcoming meetings are:

- 279 ❖ May 13<sup>th</sup> - Downtown Improvement District Budget
- 280 ❖ May 13<sup>th</sup> - Planning Commission
- 281 ❖ May 28<sup>th</sup> - Tuesday - short meeting to sign warrants and other business



- 282 ❖ June 10<sup>th</sup> - UCS Plan
- 283 ❖ June 10<sup>th</sup> - Phase 2 Goldstone Architects
- 284 ❖ June 24<sup>th</sup> - Building Bright Futures

285 **10. OTHER BUSINESS**

286 Mr. Campbell: A thank you to Mariko Silver, the President of Bennington College, as she steps down  
287 from that position.

288 Mr. Campbell: On May 23<sup>rd</sup>, there is a Southern Vermont Economic Summit in Dover and there will be  
289 representation there from Bennington.

290 Mr. Campbell: Work on the Stark Street pump track will begin this week.

291 Ms. Conner: Reminded everyone to vote on April 23<sup>rd</sup> for the new school board.

292 Ms. Conner: Attended the Opioid Phase 2 presentation and "it was amazing".

293 Ms. Conner: Green Up Day is May 4<sup>th</sup>, and in honor of her 60<sup>th</sup> birthday this year, Ms. Conner will be  
294 doing 60 hours of community service.

295 Mr. Thurber: Went to Willow Park where there were no fewer than 50 children there. It's a great  
296 community asset that we need to keep our radar on as it approaches replacement.

297 Ms. Jenkins: The 802 Showcase is April 24<sup>th</sup> at 6:00pm at the Community College of Vermont. It is an  
298 opportunity to hear entrepreneurs and people considering starting a new business pitch their ideas.

299 Mr. Scully: Thanked Mr. Hurd and staff for helping him make his transition to the Select Board.

300 **11. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

301 **A. CONTRACTS**

302 *At 8:00pm, Jeanne Conner moved and Chad Gordon seconded that the meeting was*  
303 *adjourned finding that an Executive Session be held on Contracts as premature public knowledge*  
304 *would place a person involved in the subject matter at a substantial disadvantage. The motion*  
305 *carried unanimously.*

306

307

308

309 Respectfully submitted,

310 Nancy H. Lively

311 Secretary