

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

MONDAY, MARCH 27, 2017

MINUTES

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

Absent: Justin Corcoran

ALSO PRESENT: Stuart Hurd, Town Manager; Dan Monks, Zoning Administrator & Assistant Town Manager; Keith Whitcomb, Bennington Banner; Linda E. Bermudez – Secretary; (19) Citizens

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

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

2. CONSENT AGENDA (A-C)

A) Minutes – March 13, 2017

Jeannie Jenkins noted spelling correction for Lora Block and Mary Gerisch.

B) Warrants

C) 2017 Liquor License Renewals

There were no questions.

MOTION: Jeanne Conner motioned and Donald Campbell seconded to accept and approve the minutes of March 13, 2017 with name spelling correction as presented, as well as the warrants and Liquor License Renewals as submitted. Motion passed unanimously (*Justin Corcoran absent*)

3. CITIZENS

Loyal Wescott stepped forward to state that we are in violation of the Constitution and Federal law. We cannot pick and choose which laws to follow. Women and children are in jeopardy if we are not following Federal Law.

Libby Harris stepped forward as an Apple Hill resident and an intervener in the Chelsea and Apple Hill Solar projects. Ms. Harris gave the history of these two projects noting that the Chelsea solar project is the only one in the State of Vermont to be denied (so far). The Malones (owners of both projects) have approached Ms. Harris and offered her \$50,000 as an intervener and resident of the area to approve their revised plan. Ms. Harris denied the offer.

Lora Block also a resident of Apple Hill stated the President of the Apple Hill Homeowner's Association has been harassed by the Malones. Recently the HOA reviewed and voted on the revised plan for the solar projects. The HOA voted no.

Ms. Block asked the Select Board for continued support and to keep their stand as an intervener status. Please do not agree to any behind the scenes agreements before a formal presentation is made. Lastly Ms. Block thanked the Select Board for the great Town Plan we have.

Tom Jacobs stated the Select Board is a transparent and open Board. No deals would be made behind the scenes. They are, however open to hear any formal presentation.

Sophia Gardner, Manager at the Publyck House asked Lora Block to read a statement on their behalf. The statement was strongly against the Battlefield Solar Project proposed by Ecos.

Mary Morrissey further explained the concerns of those who spoke this evening. She also asked that although Michael Keane was not re-elected to the Select Board could he still serve on the solar committee.

William Stewart stepped forward. He identified himself as the person who complained at the Annual Town Meeting about the water hauling trucks on Bradford Street. He stated that 12-15 trucks per day are drawing water and they drag race down Bradford Street.

Tom Jacobs stated he would like three members of the Select Board to do an on-site visit to witness the complaints.

The Manager stated the contract allows for approximately 100,000 gallons per day to be drawn between the hours of 7:00am and 5:00pm Monday through Friday. Originally, the hauling trucks were larger at 7,000-8,000 gallons per load. They have recently reduced in size to approximately 4,000-6,000 gallons per load therefore increasing the traffic. No more than two trucks however are allowed on the street at one time. As one truck loads the other must wait further down the street.

Mr. Stewart stated they are violating the "no idling" law as they sit idling all day long. The contract should be re-negotiated and get more money.

Tom Jacobs understands his concern. They will schedule an on-site visit to witness the issues in person.

No other citizens spoke this evening.

4. BENNINGTON COUNTY INDUSTRIAL COPORATION CONTRACT – SECOND READING

Tom Jacobs reviewed the information discussed at the last meeting regarding the proposed contract. It is a one-year contract at a cost of \$25,000. The Town Manager explained \$15,000 of that cost will come from the salary line of the former position in the Town. The remaining \$10,000 will come from the reserve fund designated for contribution to the Southern Vermont Economic Development initiative. Future years can be budgeted accordingly creating a new account for contracts.

Tom Jacobs stated his only concern was if BCIC had enough resources to support the extra work load. Jim Sullivan, Executive Director BCIC, stepped forward and stated they have expanded their staff in recent years. They have the capacity the handle more work.

The Board continued with suggestions of minor changes in verbiage in the contract. They also asked for assurance that BCIC would continue working with and sharing information with other local organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce and Bennington Downtown Alliance (formerly known as Better Bennington Corporation). Jim Sullivan introduced Jonathan Cooper as the new Economic Development Specialist for BCRC and stated they would continue to work closely with these organizations.

Mike Bethel moved forward and stated he has great faith in Mr. Sullivan. His only concern is for the other property and business owners downtown as a lot of focus is now on the Putnam Block Redevelopment project.

John Shannahan, Executive Director of Bennington Downtown Alliance (formerly BBC), stated he will continue to work across the board with other local organizations. However, he would like to see the Town be responsible for keeping us all on track. The Manager stated the Town will remain the liaison between those organizations.

Motion: Donald Campbell moved and Michael Keane seconded a motion to accept the Bennington County Industrial Corporation contract with minor revisions as discussed and authorize the Town Manager to sign on the Select Board's behalf. Motion passed (Justin Corcoran absent; Jeannie Jenkins abstained)

5. MANAGER'S REPORT

The Manager stated the Bond Council requires Board approval to move forward with interim financing of the new DPW facility.

Motion: Jim Carroll moved and Donald Campbell seconded a motion to approve and secure financing finding necessity for the DPW Garage improvements approved at the Annual Town Meeting March 7, 2017. Motion passed unanimously (Justin Corcoran absent)

6. OTHER BUSINESS

Jeanne Conner asked where she should direct questions/comments regarding the new job description for the Town's Community Development Director. The Manager asked they be e-mailed to him as soon as possible. The search to fill this position will not be only local. We will be casting a wide net to fill this position.

Jim Carroll thanked Justin Corcoran and Michael Keane for their service on the Select Board. He has learned a lot from them and appreciates their fearlessness.

Jeannie Jenkins also thanked both Mr. Corcoran and Mr. Keane and stated she has learned a lot from them as well.

Donald Campbell stated each of them brought unique and wonderful things to the Board. He will miss Mr. Keane's fantastic insights and keen business mind.

Tom Jacobs recognized Mr. Corcoran's long time commitment to the Board and his common-sense approach to government. He continued by stating Mr. Keane had done more in his 3-year term than others could do in 12 years. He gave the board direction with great leadership. Mr. Jacobs hopes Mr. Keane will continue to serve the community in other ways and share his wisdom.

Michael Keane thanked the community and stated it was a privilege to serve the Town and alongside the other Board members. He asked newly elected Chad Gordon and Carson Thurber to execute and do well.

There was no other business this evening

Tom Jacobs stated there was no need for Executive Session.

Motion: Donald Campbell moved and Jeanne Conner seconded a motion to close the meeting. Motion passed unanimously (*Justin Corcoran absent*)

Respectfully submitted,

Linda E. Bermudez
Secretary