

1 **BENNINGTON SELECT BOARD**

2 **BENNINGTON FIRE FACILITY**

3 **130 RIVER STREET**

4 **BENNINGTON, VERMONT 05201**

5 **OCTOBER 22, 2018**

6 **MINUTES**

7 **SELECT BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Thomas Jacobs-Chair; Donald Campbell-Vice Chair;  
8 Jim Carroll; 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; James  
11 Culkeen-SVSU Superintendent; Steve Nixon-MAU Principal; Rose Talbert; 2 citizens; CAT-TV;  
12 Bennington Banner and Nancy H. Lively-Secretary.

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

14 **1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

15 Recited by all present.

16 **2. CONSENT AGENDA**

17 **A. MINUTES - OCTOBER 8, 2018**

18 **B. WARRANTS**

19 *Donald Campbell moved and Jim Carroll seconded to approve A. Minutes of*  
20 *October 8, 2018 amended as follows and B. WARRANTS:*

21 *Line 197, change "Cappa" to "CAPA"*

22 *Line 203, change "flushing" to "fleshing"*

23 *The motion carried unanimously.*

24 **3. NEW MAU PRINCIPAL INTRODUCTION**

25 James Culkeen, SVSU Superintendent, introduced Steve Nixon, who has been the  
26 MAU Principal since July 2018. Mr. Nixon shared the following with the Board:

- 27
- 28 • He was raised in New Jersey and taught History in New Jersey and  
Massachusetts for several years.
  - 29 • He ultimately became Principal in Massachusetts and, because he had  
30 vacationed in Bennington for several years, answered the ad for Principal here.

31 • His goal is to prepare our students to be positive contributors to our community.

32 Board comments were:

33 Mr. Carroll: "There is a drought in civics" among those in their early 20's, and Mr. Nixon  
34 stated that the emphasis has been in the 'STEM' areas for the past 10 years, however,  
35 there will be a Government Class introduced at MAU in the fall.

36 Mr. Jacobs: Our students are our future and we have been fortunate. Our sports  
37 programs have been "superlative" and our teachers are exceptional. We would  
38 welcome students attending a BSB meeting. There are some towns that have students  
39 as ex-officio members of the Board, as well.

40 Mr. Gordon: The Putnam Project was discussed in seminar today and it would "be great"  
41 if someone could come to discuss what's going on in Town during that time.

42 Mr. Campbell: Bennington College is working on the impact of social media on  
43 everything and wondered if the high school was addressing this in any way. Mr. Nixon  
44 stated that students must be taught to not take social media's "fake news" at face  
45 value, to research their sources, and to form their own opinions.

46 Mr. Campbell: Asked if there was anything similar to Act 77 in Massachusetts, and Mr.  
47 Nixon answered that there were discussions on proficiencies and priority based  
48 standards just prior to his leaving but not to the extent of Act 77. With Act 77, students  
49 are given the opportunity to pursue their passions in whatever direction those are  
50 taking them.

51 Ms. Conner: Mentioned the improved relationship between the school and the town in  
52 the past 10 years and is looking forward to that continuing going forward.

53 The Board welcomed Mr. Nixon to the Town and his new job.

54 **4. CITIZEN PUBLIC COMMENTS**

55 None.

56 **5. CITIZEN SURVEY - PRELIMINARY REVIEW**

57 The Board made the following comments/suggestions to The 2018 Town of  
58 Bennington Citizen Survey:

- 59 • The survey consists of 25 questions and takes roughly 10 minutes to complete.  
60 • Questions on personal information that were in the previous surveys have been  
61 removed.  
62 • In regards to feedback on the Select Board, add responsiveness to public  
63 comments, are we articulating a vision for the Town, and are we providing  
64 leadership on issues that are facing the Town.

- 65 • Add a comment section at the end.
- 66 • Add an N/A or Don't Know option to questions that not everyone will be able to
- 67 answer.
- 68 • Add the Y Woods to question #11.
- 69 • Add a few categories to question #12, such as access to nature trails, dog park,
- 70 additional parking, and other.
- 71 • Question #12, add "to trails" or "to pathways" to "improved bike-ped access".
- 72 • Concerning the vision for the Town, add comments on the Town Plan with a link
- 73 to it.
- 74 • Add more opportunities for opinions.

75 Mr. Hurd stated that staff will e-mail the Board the survey with their suggestions  
76 and try to get it out to the public the first week of November. It will be available online  
77 with hard copies at various strategic locations in town.

78 Rose Talbert stated that people don't come to the meetings because they don't  
79 think their opinions matter, and Mr. Jacobs noted that the Board doesn't know what  
80 their opinions are if they don't come. There was discussion about conducting some  
81 meetings "off campus" in the future.

## 82 **6. MANAGER'S REPORT**

83 Mr. Hurd reported the following:

- 84 • The Bennington Opiate Group, a coalition of groups working on solutions to the
- 85 opioid problem, will be visiting the Select Board on November 12<sup>th</sup>.
- 86 • All agencies that receive funding from the Town have been notified of the new
- 87 requirements and schedule.
- 88 • The single use plastic bags ban issue that was raised by the Select Board at a
- 89 previous meeting has also been discussed among the members of the
- 90 Bennington County Solid Waste Alliance. The Alliance plans to take this up over
- 91 the winter with an eye to a county-wide solution.

## 92 **7. OTHER BUSINESS**

93 Ms. Conner announced that the high school will be performing Les Misérables  
94 with tickets going on sale soon, as well as, how exciting it is to see all of the work and  
95 activity that is taking place in the downtown.

96 Mr. Carroll reminded everyone to vote.

97 Mr. Campbell asked if we could pursue the Green Lantern on their interest in  
98 putting solar panels at the Transfer Station, and Mr. Hurd answered that we could put  
99 out an RFP during the winter.

100 Ms. Jenkins stated that there will be a candidate forum at the Bennington Fire  
101 Facility on October 23<sup>rd</sup> at 6:30pm and encouraged all of the candidates to participate.

102 Ms. Jenkins also stated that this Friday is the last First Friday and Saturday is  
103 Fallapalooza.

104 Mr. Gordon reiterated the announcement for Les Misérables noting that there  
105 are two casts and that tomorrow is the opening round of the playoffs with girls' soccer  
106 hosting Rutland for the only home playoff game. Also, congratulations to the  
107 Bennington Minuteman Senior Team, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders, for winning the Super Bowl  
108 yesterday for the first time since joining the NYFL. And, there is a varsity football game  
109 on Friday.

110 Mr. Jacobs stated that the Fall Fun Day was a great success and kudos to the  
111 Grow Bennington group for their efforts.

112 Mr. Jacobs also confirmed that the Purchasing Policy will be coming soon, and  
113 Mr. Campbell agreed.

## 114 **8. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

### 115 **A. CONTRACTS**

116 *At 6:56pm, Carson Thurber moved and Jim Carroll seconded that the meeting*  
117 *was adjourned finding that an Executive Session be held on Contracts as premature*  
118 *public knowledge would place a person involved in the subject matter at a substantial*  
119 *disadvantage. The motion carried unanimously.*

120

121

122 Respectfully submitted,

123 Nancy H. Lively

124 Secretary