

1 **BENNINGTON SELECT BOARD**
2 **BENNINGTON FIRE FACILITY**
3 **130 RIVER STREET**
4 **BENNINGTON, VERMONT 05201**
5 **NOVEMBER 12, 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; Ken Sigsbury-Turning Point; Dr. G. Dundas; Jo Lambling; Geri Gilmore;
12 Wendy Galbraith; Wendy Lawrence; Jeff Goldstone and Jack Myer-Goldstone Architecture; Betsy Rathbun-Gunn
13 and Lorna Mattern-United Counseling Service; Chris Bates; Joel Lentzner; 15 citizens; Mike Cutler-CAT-TV; Jim
14 Therrien-Bennington Banner and Nancy H. Lively-Secretary.

15 At 6:04pm, Chair Thomas Jacobs called the meeting to order.

16 **1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

17 Mr. Jacobs recognized all of the veterans that have served and the Pledge of Allegiance was
18 recited by all present.

19 **2. CONSENT AGENDA**

20 **A. MINUTES - OCTOBER 22, 2018**

21 **B. WARRANTS**

22 *Donald Campbell moved and Jim Carroll seconded to approve A. Minutes of October 22, 2018*
23 *and B. WARRANTS as submitted. The motion carried unanimously.*

24 **C. PROCLAMATION - SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY**

25 *Carson Thurber moved and Donald Campbell seconded to approve the Proclamation - Small*
26 *Business Saturday - November 24, 2018 as presented. The motion carried unanimously.*

27 **3. CITIZEN PUBLIC COMMENTS**

28 Chris Bates thanked the voters for electing him to the House of Representatives.

29 Joel Lentzner mentioned the Black Friday initiative that the DBA has planned and asked if the
30 Board would consider an amended funding presentation at the next Board Meeting. The Board
31 concurred.

32 **4. OPIATE GROUP DISCUSSION**

33 Mr. Jacobs noted that the FDA has just approved an opiate pain killer 1,000 times stronger than
34 morphine which further adds to the need for community involvement in solving our opiate problem.

35 Ken Sigsbury, Executive Director of the Turning Point Recovery Center in long term recovery,
36 introduced Dr. G. Dundas who did the following presentation:

- 37 • Opiate addiction is a disease and not a weakness or character flaw.
- 38 • It has taken years to get to the point of recognizing that this disease is one of the worst
39 that there is for the addict, family and community.
- 40 • In 2017, there were 72,000 people that died from a narcotic overdose in the country. In
41 Bennington, we average 10 overdoses/year.
- 42 • 60% of addictions began from prescriptions with 15% of those patients still on narcotics
43 one year later.
- 44 • In 2000, several pharmaceuticals released OxyContin indicating to the medical world
45 that patients deserved to have relief from pain, and that less than 1% would become
46 addicted. So, pain rated over a '5' by the patient became a 5th vital sign that was
47 considered when treatments were prescribed. "We should have known better but we
48 didn't."
- 49 • Jennifer Fels and Turning Point are now organizing the community to work together to
50 resolve this problem.
- 51 • Jo Lambling, Geri Gilmore, Wendy Galbraith, and Wendy Lawrence shared their personal
52 stories of how opiate addiction has/had affected their loved ones - some have died,
53 some have been clean for an extended period of time, and some are using suboxone
54 through the Hub and Spoke Program. "It doesn't make sense to be on one drug to stop
55 you from taking another drug." All of these addictions began when drugs were
56 prescribed for pain.
- 57 • Fed Up Vermont is an organization that was formed as a reaction to the loss of so many
58 individuals locally, statewide, and nationally. The first annual rally took place on August
59 31, 2017.
- 60 • Mr. Sigsbury shared his story and stated that, prior to Turning Point, the three options
61 an addict had were "jail, institutions, and death". At Turning Point, we focus on the
62 "individual as a whole, the community, and service".
- 63 • When people get out of treatment, they go back to the same habits "because they don't
64 have anything".
- 65 • We need recovery housing in Bennington with recovery programs, schedules, and
66 accountability that provides the transition from treatment to becoming a whole
67 individual.

68 Board questions/comments:

69 Ms. Conner: Why do some people become addicted and others don't? Dr. Dundas replied that
70 is unknown, however, he feels that addiction may relate to childhood experiences and/or genetics.

71 Ms. Conner: Is it possible to wean someone off of heroin? Dr. Dundas answered that that
72 doesn't work.

73 Ms. Conner: What was different about the last rehab experience that Ms. Lawrence's son had
74 that made it successful when the others weren't? Ms. Lawrence stated that neither she, nor her son,
75 knew the answer to that. She felt that he "was just ready".

76 Ms. Conner: Noted the financial benefits to being able to maintain recovery, and Ms. Lawrence
77 added that insurance covers very little rehab time.

78 Mr. Thurber: Are there any places in mind for the recovery housing? Mr. Sigsbury answered
79 that we've looked around but nowhere specific and wondered if the Board had any places in mind that
80 could be looked at collectively. Mr. Thurber: Perhaps this is an area that the Town could look into.

81 Mr. Carroll: Asked Ms. Lambling to share the meeting that they both had attended, and Ms.
82 Lambling stated that there are lawyers in Washington, D.C. that are forming charges against 40
83 different pharmaceutical companies who have made billions of dollars by fraudulently marketing their
84 drugs. Fed Up Vermont is having meetings with the lawyers on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday if the
85 Select Board would like to be a part of those. Mr. Carroll added that these lawyers are suing on behalf
86 of municipalities all over the country -- at no cost to the towns - with the money to go directly to the
87 towns.

88 Mr. Jacobs: We always read that "drugs kill more Americans than guns, cars, etc." and people
89 are tired of thoughts and prayers. "It's time for the communities and the states to step up."

90 Mr. Campbell: Is allowing people to stabilize on addiction treatment in recovery housing, as
91 suggested by the Burlington Chief of Police, consistent with the idea of sober housing? Mr. Sigsbury
92 stated that there doesn't need to be complete abstinence in recovery housing.

93 Mr. Campbell: The Burlington Chief also suggested the use of buprenorphine. Dr. Dundas
94 stated that suboxone is buprenorphine combined with narcon, and a follow-up must be done with a
95 patient when buprenorphine is used. The hope is that patients will be able to be seen in a timely
96 fashion, however, the wait time is too long.

97 Mr. Campbell: Would like the Board to be informed if anyone in the group felt that the
98 Burlington Chief had some recommendations that would work in Bennington.

99 Ms. Jenkins: Would like to see what a complete treatment program would look like, as well as,
100 what are the ideas of what is involved in establishing such a facility. Ms. Gilmore stated that there is a
101 facility in North Carolina that utilizes yoga, meditation, life skills, coping skills, education, etc. to create
102 a complete individual. However, the cost is \$15,000/month. Initially there is detox, treatment, and
103 then recovery which involves housing, counseling, and coaching.

104 All of the Board members thanked the opiate group for their efforts and acknowledged that this
105 is an ongoing community discussion.

106 **5. UCS HEADSTART PROPOSAL**

107 Jeff Goldstone from Goldstone Archietecture and Betsy Rathbun-Gunn, Headstart Director at
108 United Counseling Service did the following presentation for the Bennington Recreation Center:

- 109 • United Counseling Service (UCS) had presented plans in July 2018 for expanding the Bennington
110 Recreation Center to include Early Childhood Services.
- 111 • UCS has contracted with a national grant writer and have the opportunity to apply for another
112 Early Headstart Expansion Grant in the amount of \$2.4M to \$2.8M.
- 113 • Phase 1 is a UCS project and Phase 2 is a potential Town project.
- 114 • The plans for Phase 1 have been designed within the limited outside area and include an
115 elevator and community space.
- 116 • The existing 68 parking places will be expanded to 97 parking places.
- 117 • There is a 200' isolation zone around Morgan Springs.
- 118 • There will be 5 classrooms on the west side of the building with supporting offices, a courtyard
119 out front, a multipurpose room, and elevator to the 2nd floor and down to the four rooms in the
120 basement, a commercial kitchen to ultimately be shared with the community, and a new
121 entrance, with a drop off zone, on the front.
- 122 • Phase 2 would include the wraparound of the existing building, two outdoor basketball courts
123 and one indoor basketball court, a multipurpose room for the Town, movable walls that open
124 up for winter events, snack bar, combination of glass and open viewing areas of the pool, office
125 space, a gymnasium for basketball courts and four pickle ball courts, five health and wellness
126 rooms, a fitness room, a weight room, men's and women's locker rooms, and a running track.
- 127 • It is premature to put a price tag on Phase 2 at this time.
- 128 • Phase 1 construction should not have any down time and for Phase 2, the downtime would be
129 minimal.

130 Board comments/questions:

131 Mr. Gordon: Is excited to see the potential for additional gym space to be available.

132 Ms. Jenkins: Is also excited about the ideas of going up due to lack of horizontal space, as well
133 as, opening up the pool area.

134 Mr. Campbell: Thinks that Phase 1 and Phase 2 should be considered together. Since UCS will
135 be taking the best part of the building in Phase 1, it's important that the community be considered at
136 the same time, so we should have the cost of Phase 2 available to us as soon as we can get it.

137 Mr. Campbell: Is the UCS multipurpose room available to the community? Ms. Rathbunn-Gunn
138 answered, yes, after school day hours.

139 Mr. Campbell: Can the 200' isolation zone around Morgan Springs be adjusted? Mr. Goldstone
140 stated that a civil engineer will be brought in to look at that possibility.

141 Mr. Jacobs: It is important to be sure that all community members are considered when the
142 allocation of space is established, and the community should be given the opportunity to comment on
143 the project.

144 Mr. Carroll: Encourages the use of local contractors and solar panels on the roof, and Mr.
145 Goldstone noted that the roof design has many potential locations for solar panels.

146 Mr. Thurber: Confirmed that none of the UCS grant money is available for Phase 2 and noted
147 the steps that the Town would need to go through to make Phase 2 happen. Ms. Chowdhury added
148 that as soon as the Select Board approves going forward with Phase 2, then work could begin on how
149 to get the funding for it.

150 Ms. Conner: "This is amazing and really, really exciting."

151 ***Donald Campbell moved and Chad Gordon seconded to strongly support moving forward with***
152 ***Phase 1 and aggressively support all possibilities for Phase 2 subject to future public comments. The***
153 ***motion carried unanimously.***

154 **6. PURCHASE OFFER: 217 WASHINGTON AVENUE**

155 Mr. Hurd explained that when we first offered tax sale properties taken in 2016 for sale in a
156 competitive bid process, this property received a bid of \$25,000 - just above the minimum of \$24,823.
157 Unfortunately, that bidder ultimately backed out of the sale. We rebid in September of this year but
158 received no bids. The home is full of clothing, trash, old furnishings and food stuffs with two out
159 buildings that should be torn down.

160 Recently, Mark Jewett and Rick Roy proposed to purchase the property in an "as is" condition
161 for \$5,000.00. They are reliable contractors and will bring the property back to productive use and in
162 good condition at an estimated renovation cost of \$150,000.00. For the Town to clear the house of the
163 debris, demolish the collapsing out buildings, and to maintain the house through the coming winter
164 would cost nearly half of the minimum amount of the delinquency. Larry McLeod and Dan Monks have
165 concluded that the Board should accept the offer from Mr. Jewett and Mr. Roy.

166 ***Jim Carroll moved and Donald Campbell seconded to authorize the Town Manager to sell the***
167 ***property at 217 Washington Avenue to Mark Jewett and Rick Roy for \$5,000.00.***

168 Mr. Thurber asked if we could put a contingency in the agreement that they will stay on the
169 Grand List without a grievance, and Mr. Hurd said that could be done if the Board wishes. The
170 property will be taxed on its value as of April 1, 2019, which will probably be relatively low. However,
171 as of April 1, 2020, it would be on the Grand List at the renovated value. After much discussion, the
172 reputation of Mr. Jewett and Mr. Roy precedes them and the Board will not place any contingency in
173 the agreement.

174 *The motion carried unanimously.*

175 **7. MANAGER'S REPORT**

176 Mr. Hurd reported that the Sophomore Career Summit has requested a \$500.00 donation from
177 the Town to support the Summit. This will become a line item in the budget going forward.

178 **8. OTHER BUSINESS**

179 Ms. Conner: Congratulations to the high school for their production of Les Misérables and
180 thanked Senator Leahy for coming to Town on Tuesday.

181 Mr. Thurber: Thanked everyone for their work on the vote and acknowledged the 55% turnout.

182 Mr. Carroll: Thanked the voters for supporting him.

183 Mr. Jacobs: Recognized the following Vermont Business Magazine Rising Stars - Caleb Peckham,
184 Mike Cutler, Michelle Rocco, Chris Oldham and Forest Weyen. The Chamber of Commerce has also
185 recognized Bill Colvin, John Shannahan and Paul Carroccio.

186 Mr. Campbell: Noted the nice Veteran's Day parade on November 11th and taxes are due on
187 November 13th with an 8% penalty after the 13th. Also, rifle season is from November 10th through
188 November 25th and BATS has asked that everyone not use the trail system during this time so
189 landowners may hunt on their property if they wish to do so.

190 Mr. Carroll: Added that the 5 Rising Stars from Bennington were out of 40 in the State.

191 Ms. Jenkins: Also added that the 2 recognized by the Chamber of Commerce from Bennington
192 were out of 12 in the State. And reminded the non-profits that they need to have their information to
193 the Town Office within a few days.

194 Mr. Gordon: Noted that the \$1.5M winning lottery ticket was purchased at the Shell station in
195 Bennington.

196 **9. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

197 **A. CONTRACTS**

198 **B. REAL ESTATE**

199 *At 8:35pm, Jim Carroll moved and Donald Campbell seconded that the meeting was*
200 *adjourned finding that an Executive Session be held on Contracts and Real Estate as premature*
201 *public knowledge would place a person involved in the subject matter at a substantial disadvantage.*
202 *The motion carried unanimously.*

203

204

205 Respectfully submitted,

206 Nancy H. Lively

207 Secretary