

1 **BENNINGTON SELECT BOARD**

2 **BENNINGTON FIRE FACILITY**

3 **130 RIVER STREET**

4 **BENNINGTON, VERMONT 05201**

5 **FEBRUARY 4, 2019**

6 **MINUTES**

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

9 **SELECT BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** Jim Carroll and Carson Thurber.

10 **ALSO PRESENT:** Stuart Hurd-Town Manager; Nancy White; Aaron Sawyer; 15 citizens; Bennington Banner;  
11 Mike Cutler-CAT-TV and Nancy H. Lively-Secretary.

12 At 6:03pm, Chair Thomas Jacobs called the meeting to order.

13 **1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

14 The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all present.

15 **2. PUBLIC HEARING - PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE CHARTER OF THE TOWN OF BENNINGTON**  
16 **§103-407. MAYORAL FORM OF GOVERNMENT**

17 Mr. Campbell read the proposed section §103-407. Mayoral Form of Government.

18 Nancy White made the following comments:

- 19 • Explained the steps of the process - 1. This year, a 'Yes' vote will only add this section into the  
20 Charter; 2. Next year we will vote on switching from a Town Manager form of government to a  
21 Mayoral form of government; 3. In the following year, if the Mayoral form of government is  
22 chosen, a Mayor will be elected.
- 23 • Those in support of a Mayor, feel that the citizens of Bennington have not been heard.
- 24 • We used to get information that we have not gotten in the last decade.
- 25 • We're paying for things now that we never paid for 20 years ago, and shouldn't be paying for  
26 now.
- 27 • Last year we heard the Mayor would have too much power. Now there will be checks and  
28 balances between the Mayor, the Select Board, and the citizens.
- 29 • Last year we heard it would be a popularity contest. It will not be a popularity contest to the  
30 taxpayers. Many of us will not be able to afford our homes in a decade.
- 31 • The Town is spending money that we don't have and there are always projects that the Town  
32 can't live without. The taxpayers are paying their fair share and supporting the ones who can't.
- 33 • We want transparency and accountability.

- 34 • We're still waiting to see who will pay the fine for the salt shed. Ms. White asked if a lawyer is  
35 being paid for the salt shed. Mr. Jacobs answered that this is only a forum to hear citizen's  
36 comments and not for a dialogue with the Select Board. Mr. Gordon added that this question is  
37 not germane to the ballot question.
- 38 • Water and sewer rates are higher than ever because of the \$10M bond.
- 39 • People are concerned about the YMCA and the Recreation Center.
- 40 • There is not one question on the recent survey to the taxpayers.
- 41 • We have a right to know if the bike paths are going to decrease parking.
- 42 • The Bennington Community Visit done in 2012 was where ~200 citizens met with the Rural  
43 Development Committee. Now, 95% of the citizens don't know what the priorities are for the  
44 Town. We used to get this information but no longer do.
- 45 • A Mayor will hold the Select Board accountable to the citizens.

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47 Aaron Sawyer stated that the system we have now works, and if change is wanted, it should be  
48 with working members of the Select Board and not the system, itself.

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50 ***At 6:17pm, Jeanne Conner moved and Chad Gordon seconded to close the Public Hearing -***  
51 ***Proposed Amendments to the Charter of the Town of Bennington §103-407. Mayoral Form of***  
52 ***Government until February 11, 2019 at 6:00pm. The motion carried unanimously with Jim Carroll***  
53 ***and Carson Thurber absent.***

54 **3. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

55 **A. CONTRACT**

56 ***At 6:18pm, Donald Campbell moved and Jeanne Conner seconded that the meeting was***  
57 ***adjourned finding that an Executive Session be held on a Contract as premature public knowledge***  
58 ***would place a person involved in the subject matter at a substantial disadvantage. The motion***  
59 ***carried unanimously.***

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62 Respectfully submitted,

63 Nancy H. Lively

64 Secretary