

1 **BENNINGTON SELECT BOARD**

2 **BENNINGTON FIRE FACILITY**

3 **130 RIVER STREET**

4 **BENNINGTON, VERMONT 05201**

5 **FEBRUARY 25, 2019**

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:** Daniel Monks-Assistant Town Manager and Planning Director; Rachel  
11 Blumenthal; Paul Doucette-Police Chief; Jeff Vickers-Past Fire Chief; Dr. Richard Dundas; Mike  
12 McDonough-Planning Commission Chair; Robert Ebert; Madison Kramer-BCRC; David Durfee;  
13 Barbara True-Weber; Lynn Green; Catherine Bryars; 20 citizens; Bennington Banner; Mike  
14 Cutler-CAT-TV and Nancy H. Lively-Secretary.

15 At 6:04pm, Chair Thomas Jacobs 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 - FEBRUARY 11, 2019**

20 **B. WARRANTS**

21 *Donald Campbell moved and Carson Thurber seconded to approve the Consent*  
22 *Agenda as submitted. The motion carried unanimously.*

23 **3. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

24 Rachel Blumenthal noted that the Attorney General inferred that there was bias  
25 in the Police Department and that an outside review should be done on them. Ms.  
26 Blumenthal feels that the selection of the reviewers, and the scope of the review,  
27 should be decided by the Select Board and community members with some of those  
28 community members to be of color.

29 Mr. Jacobs stated that the Board will be making the decisions on how to proceed  
30 on this issue. No timeline has been set for the review, which will be a review of best  
31 practices and procedures, to take place.

32 **4. PUBLIC HEARING - LADDER TRUCK BOND - CHIEF PAUL DOUCETTE AND JEFF VICKERS**

33 Police Chief Paul Doucette and Past Fire Chief Jeff Vickers did the following  
34 presentation:

- 35 • The goal of the volunteer fire department is to serve the community the best  
36 they can and having working equipment is necessary to do that.
- 37 • The existing ladder truck is a 20-year truck that was purchased in 1997. It is  
38 functional, however, it has had many parts replaced and is showing its age.
- 39 • If the vote passed, we would order the truck in July 2019, it would take 1 year to  
40 build so we would receive it in July 2020, and the 1<sup>st</sup> payment would be due in  
41 July 2021.
- 42 • A truck over 15 years old may not have the safety upgrades that are in the NFPA  
43 standards.
- 44 • The safety of the fire fighters comes first.
- 45 • A ladder truck is beneficial in fighting fires in multi-story buildings. The ground  
46 trucks have a 35' extension and the ladder truck has ~100' extension with the  
47 ability to drop many gallons of water into the top of a building.
- 48 • The fire facility is now paid for so it is anticipated that the effect on the individual  
49 tax payer would be minimal, ~2%.
- 50 • Based on conversations with like departments and online information, it would  
51 cost \$250,000 to refurbish the existing truck, and if a catastrophic incident  
52 occurred, we would only get the value of the truck from the insurance company,  
53 which is \$50,000-\$60,000.
- 54 • The existing truck will always have some value and may be able to be sold for  
55 some dollars to a smaller department for them to refurbish.
- 56 • We have ~\$250,000 in reserve to put toward the purchase of a new truck.
- 57 • The cost of just the personnel of a paid fire department would be multiple times  
58 the cost of the ladder truck each year. Bennington's budget is \$44/person  
59 served, whereas, paid departments are \$125-\$194/person served.
- 60 • We currently have 60-65 members with 25-30 active.
- 61 • Studies have been done that showed that functional equipment was the most  
62 important factor in keeping and recruiting a volunteer fire department.

63 Mr. Jacobs reiterated how appreciative the Board is of the volunteer fire  
64 department and the importance of keeping them as safe as possible.

65 **5. CLIMATE ADVOCATES OF BENNINGTON PRESENTATION**

66 Michael McDonough, Chair of the Planning Commission, stated that Bennington  
67 has an extensive energy plan within the Town Plan that was adopted in 2015 and the  
68 Planning Commission endorses the re-establishment of the Bennington Energy  
69 Committee as does the Climate Advocates of Bennington.

70 Dr. Richard Dundas, Madison Kramer, and David Durfee did the following  
71 presentation:

- 72 • We need to switch from fossil fuel to renewable energy and make the Town  
73 more energy efficient. The Town has done some work in this area, however,  
74 there is still much to do and more savings to be had.
- 75 • The Town Plan - that the Select Board has approved - states that “the Town  
76 should re-establish, maintain and support a municipal Energy Committee”.
- 77 • Energy committees are being formed in several towns within the BCRC region.  
78 Dorset and Manchester each have one and talks are going on in Rupert,  
79 Arlington, and Shaftsbury.
- 80 • Climate awareness must involve the entire community, region and state.
- 81 • The Climate Advocates don’t intend to be the Energy Committee but have  
82 developed a list of volunteers for the Select Board to consider for it. The Climate  
83 Advocates group would, however, assist the formal Energy Committee in any  
84 way they could.

85 The Board thanked the Climate Advocates for their work and ideas on the  
86 forming of an Energy Committee.

87 *It was the consensus of the Board to re-institute the Bennington Energy*  
88 *Committee by April 1, 2019.*

89 **6. DOWNTOWN TRANSPORTATION GRANT - SPLASH PAD**

90 Dan Monks stated that the grant is to help fund Phase II of the Splash Pad  
91 project. The grant application is for \$85,241 with the Grow Bennington Initiative to  
92 match the \$85,241.

93 Lynn Green reminded everyone that parks, playgrounds, water features and rest  
94 rooms encourage downtown foot traffic and a sense of community in every town. 40%  
95 of Phase I was paid for by the Catamount Connections grant with Grow Bennington  
96 raising the remaining 60%. Many local businesses have contributed, as well as, the CDC  
97 who will be building the stage. Phase I will be completed by the summer of 2019, and  
98 the hope is, if we get this grant, that the grand opening would be in the fall of 2019 -  
99 with a few touchup things that would still need to be done.

100 Catherine Bryars added that this is a competitive grant and feels that the fact  
101 that the project is already underway is a plus. The award date will be late April 2019.

102 ***Donald Campbell moved and Jim Carroll seconded to approve the 2019***  
103 ***Downtown Transportation Fund Grant Application for \$85,241.00 for the Merchants***  
104 ***Park Project. The motion carried unanimously.***

105 **7. FY2020 BUDGET PRESENTATION**

106 Mr. Monks did the following FY2020 Budget Presentation:

- 107 ➤ The FY20 proposed budget without ballot agencies increased 2.6% from FY19.
- 108 ➤ The General Activities Fund is broken down with Highway-31%; Police-29%;
- 109 Administration-25%; All Agencies-7%; Recreation w/Senior Center-5%; and Fire
- 110 Department-3%.
- 111 ➤ Municipal Budget Agencies (6)=\$749,880; Ballot Agencies (12)=\$131,850.
- 112 ➤ The Grand List has increased consistently from 2015-2018 by \$3M each year to
- 113 \$1,024M in 2018.
- 114 ➤ The Municipal Tax Rate for total General, Highway, and Fire Funds - without
- 115 ballot agencies - increased 1.8% to 1.1839. The increase if all of the ballot
- 116 agencies are approved would be 1.9%.

## 117 **8. LIQUOR LICENSES**

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

### 120 *2019 1<sup>st</sup> Class Renewals -*

- 121 1. Chili's Grill & Bar
- 122 2. Donovan's (& outside consumption permit)
- 123 3. Fuji Hibachi & Asian Bistro
- 124 4. Mt. Anthony Golf & Tennis Club
- 125 5. Pangaea (& outside consumption permit)
- 126 6. Sodexo Vermont, Inc. (& outside consumption permit)

### 127 *2019 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Renewals -*

- 128 1. Beverage Den, Inc.
- 129 2. Cumberland Farms #8035
- 130 3. Mag's Market
- 131 4. Walgreens #17631
- 132 5. Wal-Mart #2289

## 133 **9. MANAGER'S REPORT**

134 *Donald Campbell moved and Jim Carroll seconded to appoint John Hale to the*  
135 *second seat of the BCRC position expiring in March 2021. The motion carried*  
136 *unanimously.*

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138 Mr. Monks reported that "We Make Cool Stuff" manufacturing businesses are  
139 planning a forum for April 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Bennington Fire Facility from 4:00-6:00pm to  
140 highlight local manufacturing job availability and seeks a \$200 sponsorship from the  
141 Town.

142 *Jim Carroll moved and Jeanne Conner seconded to approve the \$200.00*  
143 *contribution to the "We Make Cool Stuff" April 3, 2019 forum.*

144 Mr. Gordon reminded the Board that we were to write a policy so that we're  
145 consistent with these relatively small requests for support and so the public is aware of  
146 what is expected. The Board concurred.

147 *The motion carried unanimously.*

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149 On PFOA, Mr. Monks reported that we are now awaiting a formal announcement  
150 and the beginning of work for Phase II to begin this construction season to deliver clean  
151 water to the East side of town.

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153 Ms. Conner asked if there has been any follow-up on the formation of the  
154 Recreation Center Committee, and Mr. Monks responded that we have a list of names  
155 that need to be contacted to begin meeting at their 1<sup>st</sup> quarterly meeting in March  
156 2019.

157 **10. OTHER BUSINESS**

158 Ms. Conner stated that the array of solar panels on Monument Avenue was  
159 approved at the January 28<sup>th</sup> meeting based on wrong information. The Board was told  
160 that the neighbors had been contacted and they were not. Ms. Conner feels that the  
161 vote should be rescinded and that the parties involved should return to the Board for  
162 approval after the neighbors have been contacted. Also, she feels that the process  
163 should be more formal so what is required is clearer. Mr. Monks added that, as far as  
164 he knows, there has not yet been an application to the Public Utilities Commission so  
165 there is time to rescind the vote at the next regular meeting.

166 *The parties will be invited to the March 11, 2019 meeting, however, the vote will*  
167 *be rescinded at that meeting whether they attend or not.*

168 Mr. Carroll noted that we are in need of day cares in the State and that an  
169 individual can have as many as 10 children in their home to care for. He will bring more  
170 information on the agencies to contact for this at a later date.

171 Mr. Jacobs asked if Gene Rudzewicz's sewer situation had been resolved, and  
172 Mr. Monks did not know. If Mr. Hurd can't reach an agreement with Mr. Rudzewicz, it  
173 should be an agenda item.

174 Mr. Campbell reminded everyone that March 5<sup>th</sup> is voting day.

175 Ms. Jenkins stated that Breadloaf is hiring 35 carpenters and 23 laborers  
176 beginning March 5<sup>th</sup> at the Putnam Redevelopment site. These are good paying jobs  
177 with health benefits and \$10,000/year education benefits. The jobs are for at least one  
178 year with the potential for some to move up into management positions.

179 Ms. Jenkins noted that there will be an 802 Forum on March 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:15pm at  
180 the CCV Community Room for people that are thinking of starting a business to network.

181 Mr. Gordon congratulated the wrestling team for winning their 31<sup>st</sup> consecutive  
182 State Championship and the 100<sup>th</sup> State Championship for the school, in general. He  
183 also mentioned that Varsity Cheerleading qualified for New England's, as well as, the  
184 Varsity Track Team and the Nordic Track Team. Boys and girls basketball games will also  
185 be taking place this week.

186 **11. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

187 **A. CONTRACT**

188 **B. PERSONNEL**

189 **At 8:13pm, Donald Campbell moved and Jim Carroll seconded that the meeting**  
190 **was adjourned finding that an Executive Session be held on Contract and Personnel as**  
191 **premature public knowledge would place a person involved in the subject matter at a**  
192 **substantial disadvantage. The motion carried unanimously.**

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197 Respectfully submitted,

198 Nancy H. Lively

199 Secretary