

1 **BENNINGTON SELECT BOARD**

2 **BENNINGTON FIRE FACILITY**

3 **130 RIVER STREET**

4 **BENNINGTON, VERMONT 05201**

5 **AUGUST 26, 2019**

6 **MINUTES**

7 **SELECT BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Donald Campbell-Chair; Jeannie Jenkins-Vice Chair; Jeanne
8 Conner; Jim Carroll; and Bruce Lee-Clark.

9 **SELECT BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** Chad Gordon and Bill Scully.

10 **ALSO PRESENT:** Stuart Hurd-Town Manager; Daniel Monks-Assistant Town Manager and Planning
11 Director; William Colvin and Jonathan Cooper-BCIC; Jonah Spivak; Representative Mary Morrissey; Don
12 Miller-Bennington Historical Society; Lynn Mazzo; 10 citizens; Mike Cutler-CAT-TV; and Nancy H. Lively-
13 Secretary.

14 At 6:03pm, Chair Donald Campbell called the meeting to order.

15 **1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

16 The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all present.

17 **2. CONSENT AGENDA**

18 **A. MINUTES - AUGUST 12, 2019**

19 **B. WARRANTS**

20 *Bruce Lee-Clark moved and Jeannie Jenkins seconded to approve the Consent Agenda*
21 *amended as follows:*

22 *August 12, 2019 Minutes - Line 12 and Line 147, Change "Cardaman" to "Carton"*

23 *The motion carried with Chad Gordon and Bill Scully absent.*

24 **3. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

25 Lynn Mazzo asked when the police department assessment would begin, and Mr. Hurd
26 answered that the IACP will be kicking off their work schedule at the September 9th Select
27 Board Meeting. They will be given the names of citizens who would like to be interviewed prior
28 to then and it is expected that the public will be able to make comments at that meeting, as
29 well.

30 **4. BCIC QUARTERLY PRESENTATION**

31 Bill Colvin and Jonathan Cooper did the following BCIC Quarterly Presentation:

- 32 • In FY17, BCRC integrated with BCIC to manage that organization and the Town has had a
33 contractual agreement with the BCIC since then.
- 34 • The BCIC functions in three areas - Business Development, Workforce Development, and
35 Real Estate Development.
- 36 • Funding that has come to the region in Awards and Commitments over a 3-year period
37 total \$6.79M. This does not include the dollars that came in for the Putnam Project.
38 41% of the \$6.79M came from the State, 35% from Federal, and 15% from the Private
39 sector. The remaining 6% was from the EPA Brownfields RLFs and 3% from
40 Philanthropic donations.
- 41 • Grants from the above sources include:
 - 42 ✓ State - Historic Tax Credits, VHCB Housing, Training Programs, and BGS Building
43 Communities.
 - 44 ✓ Federal - EPA Brownfields, EDA Technical Assistance, and USDA Rural Business
45 Development.
 - 46 ✓ Private - USDA, VTP, and BGS - all with business matches required.
- 47 • Over \$500,000 has come directly to Bennington.
- 48 • The Workforce & Education Committee works to connect and promote K-16 education,
49 adult education, the general public and area businesses to enhance employability and
50 vitality in the region by:
 - 51 ➤ Increasing dialogue about common areas of interest and need
 - 52 ➤ Increasing awareness of a broad range of careers in the region
 - 53 ➤ Articulating the role of post-secondary education and training in economic
54 development
 - 55 ➤ Encouraging and support entrepreneurial activity in Bennington County
- 56 • Media coverage of Events and Programming such as career fairs, tours and open houses,
57 and trainings that have taken place, and are about to take place, is a great way for
58 businesses to support workforce development.
- 59 • The Start-Up 802 Entrepreneurship Program develops an entrepreneurial mindset for
60 success to develop the skills needed to recognize opportunities, explore creative ideas,
61 and learn what it takes to start a small business.
- 62 • It has been made clear at national and state conferences that the BCIC approach is best
63 practice. We will be doing a fair in Addison County on September 3rd and Windham
64 County has copied our Sophomore Summit.
- 65 • The BCIC is debt free and owns the Putnam Block.
- 66 • Existing contamination was cleaned up and we were issued an environmental
67 exemption. This gives any future property owners the confidence that they are not
68 taking on any pre-existing environmental issues.
- 69 • Phase I received grants totaling \$3,816,960 and loans totaling \$430,000. We have also
70 received \$500,000 in grants toward the anticipated cost of \$800,000-\$900,000 for the

- 71 remaining cleanup of the Putnam Block in Phase II. Phase I groundbreaking was on
 72 August 7th.
- 73 • The closing required 62 wire transfers, 463 legal documents that each had to be
 74 approved by 33 individual attorneys.
 - 75 • Old Castle Theater now owns their building; there will be a coffee shop, book shop and
 76 an IT company in the Courthouse Building; there will be a restaurant, public retail use,
 77 office use, and 18 residential units in the Putnam Hotel; the Visiting Nurses will have an
 78 office, SVHC will have an office, a grocery store, Bennington College Development office,
 79 and 12 residential units in the Winslow Building.
 - 80 • Noteworthy, positive comments were made by Governor Scott, Congressman Welch,
 81 Deputy Secretary of Commerce Brady, and US BUS Bankcorp VP Alderton at the
 82 groundbreaking.
 - 83 • The following statistics were noted over a 5-year period:
 - 84 ○ Median Home Price increased 12.9% - Source: VT Housing Finance Agency
 - 85 ○ Population in Poverty decreased 17% - Source: US Census Bureau
 - 86 ○ Income in Bennington increased 23.6% - Source: US Census Bureau
 - 87 ○ Jobs in Bennington first back-to-back gain since Great Recession of 2008 -
 88 Source: VT Dept. of Labor
 - 89 ○ Unemployment at 3.1% - lowest since 2008

90 *Questions/comments from the Board:*

91 Mr. Carroll: How does a business apply for a grant, and Mr. Cooper answered that information
 92 on how to apply is on the Agency for Commerce and Community Development website. The
 93 BCIC also tries to reach as many business owners as they can to help them through the process.
 94 There will be a Summit around October 23rd put on by the Department of Labor for businesses
 95 in Bennington.

96 Ms. Conner: Asked why employers are having trouble finding help, and Mr. Colvin responded
 97 that we have an aged population with not enough people of working age. The need for
 98 employees is “across the board” with employers reaching farther out geographically in their
 99 searches.

100 Mr. Lee-Clark: Would like the presentation in a digital format, and Mr. Colvin will provide that.

101 **5. VERMONT’S 250TH ANNIVERSARY**

102 Jonah Spivak did the following presentation on Vermont’s 250th Anniversary:

- 103 ❖ The efforts toward the celebration of Vermont’s 250th Anniversary was the brainchild of
 104 the Regional Chamber of Commerce.
- 105 ❖ The idea was first presented to the legislature in 2017 and is expected to be acted into
 106 law in 2020.

- 107 ❖ It is now time to present this to the public since Bennington/Battle of Bennington is the
- 108 center of the Founding of Vermont.
- 109 ❖ More men were killed and captured in the battle of Bennington than during both battles
- 110 of Saratoga.
- 111 ❖ Hiland Hall was instrumental in the building of the Bennington Battle Monument, the
- 112 tallest battle monument in the country. Unfortunately he died a few years before it was
- 113 dedicated in 1891.
- 114 ❖ The Founding of Vermont began with the Declaration of Independence in Westminster
- 115 in January, the Battle of Hubbardton in July, the Signing of the Constitution in Windsor
- 116 in July, and culminating at the Battle of Bennington - the turning point of the Revolution
- 117 - in August.
- 118 ❖ It will be a yearlong celebration.
- 119 ❖ There are over 200 accounts of the battle, and much work has been done on mapping
- 120 the battlefield boundaries, the area around the monument when it was constructed, as
- 121 well as, the boundaries of Vermont.
- 122 ❖ Some ideas for the 250th Celebration are:
- 123 ▪ Rebuild the buildings that were around the monument.
- 124 ▪ Rebuild 'The Old Red Covered Bridge' and old road that lead to the monument
- 125 ▪ Creation of a new facility/site for 2027 (think "world's fair" for Vermont)
- 126 ▪ Use of Railroad for Interpretation & Transport
- 127 ▪ Connections with the Federal 250th Celebration in 2026 ('76 flag known as The
- 128 Bennington Flag)
- 129 ▪ Connections with NY, NH, MA, CT & USA
- 130 ❖ Next steps for the 250th Commission are:
- 131 ▪ First, create the Commission
- 132 ▪ See that all schools in Vermont work with historians and educate the students to
- 133 our history and the reason we are so proud of it.
- 134 ▪ Creation of a website - in the interim, the Chamber will set up a page for the
- 135 250th
- 136 ▪ Creation of ideas for celebration 2019-2020
- 137 ▪ Report back to Legislature 2020 and plan for next steps for 2027
- 138 ▪ Report back to Legislature 2021 with the plans
- 139 ❖ Thanks to the Chamber of Commerce, the Bennington Historical Society, Historian Bob
- 140 Hoar, the Governor and the Legislature, our local media, and many others.
- 141 ❖ We have followed the Federal government's lead to call it the "Semiquincentennial".

142 *Jeannie Jenkins moved and Bruce Lee-Clark seconded for the Select Board to write*
 143 *Letters of Endorsement to the Vermont House of Representatives and Senate Government*
 144 *Operations Committees and to the Governor in support of the Vermont 250th*
 145 *Semiquincentennial Celebration. The motion carried with Chad Gordon and Bill Scully absent.*

146 **6. MANAGER'S REPORT**

147 *Bruce Lee-Clark moved and Jeanne Conner seconded to grant the Bennington Fire*
148 *Department a liquor license waiver for their Clam Bake to be held at the Bennington Fire*
149 *Facility on September 22, 2019. Alcoholic beverages will be served by Your Belly's Deli. The*
150 *motion carried with Chad Gordon and Bill Scully absent.*

151 Mr. Hurd reported the following:

- 152 ○ Staff will put together a complete package of Board policies that govern the Board and
153 its actions and reactions to issues confronting it.
- 154 ○ 217 Washington Avenue Auction - The public auction will be held August 29th at
155 10:00am in the Town Offices, Conference Room 2. Five or six people had attended the
156 public showing on Saturday, August 24th.
- 157 ○ PFOA - Contracts #8 and #9 for work on the upper end of East Road and Chapel Road
158 will go out to bid by the end of September.
- 159 ○ WWTF Project - We may have a solution to the current odor problems at the
160 Wastewater Facility within the next three weeks. Staff have suggested that we re-open
161 the composting facility which seems like an excellent idea. The equipment is
162 functioning and the State is on board for a temporary re-opening.
- 163 ○ Morgan Spring Delivery System - We now own the 747 Main Street property and we
164 continue to have conversations with a potential investor about the project and its cost.
- 165 ○ Opioid Lawsuit - Filings on behalf of the Town are about a week away and the Vermont
166 League of Cities and Towns will host a meeting in the middle of September to reach out
167 to other communities.

168 **7. FUTURE AGENDA**

169 The following are planned for the indicated meeting dates:

- 170 ❖ September 9th - YMCA Report, Revisit the Purchasing Policy, IACP Presentation, Energy
171 Committee interview.
- 172 ❖ September 23rd - Housing Issues.

173 **8. OTHER BUSINESS**

174 Ms. Conner: Thought that it was very beneficial when the Vermont League of Cities and Towns
175 came down to do Select Board training with Board members from several towns and
176 consideration should be given to them doing that again. Further discussion will take place on
177 this subject.

178 Ms. Jenkins: On August 28th, at the Bennington Free Library there will be a We People of
179 Vermont meeting and on September 12th at the Manchester Community Library there will be an
180 Energy Committee Meeting at 5:00pm and a Transportation Climate Initiative Meeting at
181 6:30pm.

182 Mr. Campbell: Urged everyone to attend Garlicfest on August 31st and September 1st.

183 **9. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

184 **A. CONTRACTS**

185 *At 7:32pm, Jeannie Jenkins moved and Bruce Lee-Clark seconded that the meeting was*
186 *adjourned finding that an Executive Session be held on Contracts as premature public*
187 *knowledge would place a person involved in the subject matter at a substantial*
188 *disadvantage. The motion carried with Chad Gordon and Bill Scully absent.*

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190

191 Respectfully submitted,

192 Nancy H. Lively

193 Secretary

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