

1 **BENNINGTON SELECT BOARD**

2 **BENNINGTON FIRE FACILITY**

3 **130 RIVER STREET**

4 **BENNINGTON, VERMONT 05201**

5 **MARCH 9, 2020**

6 **MINUTES**

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

9 **SELECT BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** Bill Scully.

10 **ALSO PRESENT:** Daniel Monks-Assistant Town Manager and Planning Director; Shannon Barsotti-  
11 Community Development Director; Thomas Dee-SVMC CEO; Dr. Pamela Duchene-SVMC; Donna Barron-  
12 SVMC; Wendy Morse-DOL; Rob Bahny-CDC; Laura Boudreau-SVSU Asst. Superintendent; Bill Stewart;  
13 Police Officer; 4 citizens; CAT-TV and Nancy H. Lively-Secretary.

14 At 6:00pm, Chair Donald Campbell called the meeting to order.

15 **1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

16 The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all present.

17 \_\_\_\_\_  
18 Mr. Campbell requested to remove Item 4. SVMC Land Sale from the agenda and to add 1A.  
19 Update on the Corona Virus. The consensus of the Board agreed.

20 **1A. UPDATE ON THE CORONA VIRUS**

21 Tom Dee, CEO of SVMC, shared the following information with the Board on the Corona Virus, or  
22 COVID-19:

- 23 • On March 5<sup>th</sup>, an individual came to the Emergency Room exhibiting the Corona Virus symptoms  
24 of a fever, cough and shortness of breath. He was immediately admitted, placed in isolation in a  
25 negative pressure room, and tested presumptive positive for COVID-19 with conclusive results  
26 from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) expected later this week.
- 27 • We are reaching out to anyone who has had contact with this individual and documenting his  
28 travel history.
- 29 • For individuals who have been referred by their PCP, SVMC is offering a drive-up testing service to  
30 be done without leaving your car.
- 31 • SVMC is able to treat all patients that are suspected of having COVID-19.
- 32 • The hospital is a safe place to be. We are closely screening anyone entering the hospital, and are  
33 in constant contact with the Vermont Department of Health.

34 *Board comments/questions:*

35 Mr. Carroll: It was noted at a briefing this morning, that the Department of Health could give the order for  
36 testing so the patients can avoid being in a crowded PCP waiting room. Mr. Dee responded that was the  
37 reason for setting up the remote testing areas. Also, there will be a designated physician that will be able  
38 to issue the orders.

39 Ms. Conner: Where is the remote testing area, and Mr. Dee answered that it is by the doctor's flagpole  
40 entrance. Signage will be going up.

41 Ms. Conner: Assumed the hospital was in close contact with SVSU, and Ms. Barron said that they were.

42 Mr. Campbell: How can people get clear and accurate information, and Mr. Dee stated the local websites,  
43 Vermont Department of Health website, and the Center for Disease Control website would be the places  
44 to go. By the end of the week, the SVMC will have a hotline for people to call.

## 45 **2. CONSENT AGENDA**

46 **A. MINUTES - February 17, 2020 and February 24, 2020**

47 **B. WARRANTS**

48 **C. LIQUOR LICENSES**

49 *Bruce Lee-Clark moved and Jim Carroll seconded to approve the Consent Agenda amended as*  
50 *follows:*

51 *Minutes of February 24, 2020, Line 44 and 45 - Change "Southern Economic Development (SED)"*  
52 *to "Southern Comprehensive Economic Development (SCED)"*

53 Ms. Conner clarified that the Board would know if there was ever a problem with any of the liquor  
54 licenses prior to them being presented for approval.

55 *The motion carried with Chad Gordon abstaining from the Minutes of February 17, 2020 and Bill Scully*  
56 *absent.*

## 57 **3. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

58 Bill Stewart stated that the one truck per hour has "gone to the wayside" to 14 trucks/day for the  
59 past 3 weeks. This is the 8<sup>th</sup> time that he has brought this issue to the Board.

60 Mr. Monks commented that the contract doesn't limit the number of trucks - only the hours of  
61 operation and number of gallons of water per day. They are within the terms of the contract, and  
62 apparently have honored our request for the number of trucks per hour on occasion. We can request  
63 that they limit to one truck per hour again. Also, we have a permanent location on Main Street and are  
64 currently working with two vendors to finance the new facility for construction this construction season.

65 Mr. Carroll noted that he watched the trucks for four hours one day, and everyone was on their  
66 "best behavior". Mr. Campbell added that he spoke with a driver sitting at Route 279 who was waiting for  
67 the hour to elapse for his turn to go, so some are respecting the one per hour.

## 68 **4. SVMC LAND SALE**

69 This agenda item was removed from the agenda.

## 70 **5. WORKFORCE PRESENTATION**

71 Ms. Barsotti explained that she attends the Workforce and Education Committee, and since next  
72 month is April Career Month, she has asked Wendy Morse from the Department of Labor (DOL), Rob  
73 Bahny from the Career Development Center (CDC), and Laura Boudreau, the SVSU Assistant  
74 Superintendent to do the following Workforce Presentation:

75 Wendy Morse, DOL:

- 76 ➤ Shared the four pages of the draft of the April Career Month Bennington County Activities  
77 from March 24<sup>th</sup> thru May 21<sup>st</sup> with the Board. Eight years ago, this initiative started out as  
78 a week and has now expanded to over a month with ~25 committee members meeting  
79 every month. This amount of enthusiasm in Bennington is unprecedented in other  
80 communities.
- 81 ➤ She manages three of the 12 American Job Center offices in the State at Middlebury,  
82 Rutland, and Bennington.
- 83 ➤ The unemployment rate is low at 2.3% in the State and 3.1% in Bennington, which means  
84 there are 340 people in Bennington receiving unemployment benefits.
- 85 ➤ It is a challenge now for employers to fill their openings due to the low unemployment, as  
86 well as, the fact that those applying for jobs do not have the required skill set.
- 87 ➤ Employers are now in a position to take risks to custom train the applicants to fit what  
88 their needs are.
- 89 ➤ Workforce growth has been flat for the past 20 years.
- 90 ➤ There were more people in the workforce 30-40 years ago than there are now.
- 91 ➤ The earlier a person enters the workforce, the more likely they will stay in the workforce.
- 92 ➤ One way to expand the labor force is to encourage relocation to Vermont through initiative  
93 such as the Stay-To-Stay program, another is to reach out to our youth, and another is to  
94 draw out the people that are already here but not part of the workforce for whatever  
95 reason.
- 96 ➤ Workforce and Education provides that "continuum of career exploration specific to  
97 Bennington County".
- 98 ➤ Read the April 8, 2019 Proclamation declaring the Month of April as Bennington Career  
99 Month.

100 Rob Bahny, CDC:

- 101 ✓ Stated that the CDC has a wide variety of programs beyond the traditional vocational programs,  
102 such as, pre-law, human services, theatre, and video production.
- 103 ✓ We also have 7 adult education programs, which include an LNA program, CDL program, an EMT  
104 program, an advanced manufacturing program, and a culinary program plus 2 online programs -  
105 veterinary assistant and pharmacy technician.
- 106 ✓ Our main goal is to prepare the students to be able to fulfill the workforce needs.
- 107 ✓ We are also having a three-part workshop on April 22, 29, and May 6 from 5:30-8:30pm on  
108 Understanding Opiate Addiction at a cost of \$30. Financial assistance is available.

109 Laura Boudreau, SVSU Asst. Supt.:

- 110 ❖ As part of Personalization, we have our students set pathways and goals.
- 111 ❖ We are always looking for community mentors.
- 112 ❖ We have career events for all ages beginning at the elementary school level.

113 Jeannie Jenkins, CCV (to replace their absent presenter):

- 114 ○ CCV collaborates with everyone in the Workforce and Education group and offers long term and
- 115 short term education and training.
- 116 ○ We offer 11 Associate Degrees and ~11 short term certificates to be completed in a year or less.
- 117 ○ We started the 802 program that addresses entrepreneurship and gives the participants the
- 118 opportunity to experience what it would be like to operate a business.
- 119 ○ We also work with apprenticeship programs so people can be paid while they are learning on the
- 120 job.

121 *Board comments/questions:*

122 Mr. Campbell: Will the endeavors of the Workforce and Education group be able to provide people to the

123 businesses to satisfy their needs in time, and Mr. Bahny stated that they have the programs to train the

124 people but the challenge is to find the people to train. Ms. Morse added that those entering the

125 workforce now are much more knowledgeable than they were when this effort began 8 years ago. "You

126 have to start somewhere."

127 Mr. Lee-Clark: Are there trainings for work in construction, and Mr. Bahny answered that they may have a

128 building trade program in the fall with, again, the challenge to get people to enroll. The fact that we can't

129 guarantee that there will a job when they are finished training contributes to the lack of incentive to get

130 trained. Mr. Lee-Clark added how many of the workforce in Bennington have come from the CDC and

131 high school.

132 Ms. Conner: Are plumbing and electrical part of the building trades, and Mr. Bahny responded that they

133 are offered in Rutland.

134 Ms. Conner: Are finding instructors also a challenge, and Mr. Bahny answered that it depends.

135 Ms. Jenkins: Asked about the matchup of high school students who want to work with employers, and Mr.

136 Bahny noted that there will a first time collaboration with high school students from the area schools and

137 employers on May 27<sup>th</sup> to get everyone together to discuss the expectations of the potential employees

138 and the employers.

139 Mr. Campbell: Can the Town help the efforts of the Committee, and all three stated to encourage

140 employers everywhere to share their experience and to mentor our youth.

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

142 Mr. Monks reported the following:

- 143 ● The Certificate of Highway Mileage was circulated for signatures.
- 144 ● The Household Hazardous Waste Collection Event will be held May 9, 2020 at the MAU
- 145 Middle School from 9:00am to 1:00pm.
- 146 ● With the upcoming retirements of Kevin Goodhue and Larry McLeod, we have hired Paul
- 147 Dansereau who is LEED certified and has in excess of 30 years of construction management
- 148 and facilities management experience.

## 149 **7. UPCOMING AGENDA**

150 The following are planned for the indicated meeting dates:

- 151 ❖ March 23<sup>rd</sup> - SVMC Land Sale; Appoint a Delegate and 2 Alternates to CUD; Possible Update on
- 152 BCRC.
- 153 ❖ April 13<sup>th</sup> - Reorganization.
- 154 ❖ Mid-April - IACP Report.

155 **8. OTHER BUSINESS**

156 Mr. Campbell: Is looking forward to the Energy Committee presenting their final recommendations. Ms.  
157 Jenkins added that the original 40+ recommendations will be grouped as to who the partners will be and  
158 which are of the highest priority so as to gather more information on those.

159 Ms. Conner: Apologized to Dick Sears and Brian Campion for not being able to attend their Diversity  
160 Conference held this evening.

161 Ms. Conner: Would like to revisit having the Joint Board Training offered by the VLCT.

162 Mr. Carroll: Re-emphasized that the Department of Health can give you the order to be able to be tested  
163 for COVID-19. It isn't necessary to spend the money to go to your PCP.

164 Ms. Jenkins: There is a Workshop for Kids on March 21<sup>st</sup> at Bennington Area Makers from 10:00am-  
165 1:00pm and on March 23<sup>rd</sup> there is a Personal Cyber Security Workshop at the Medical Center from  
166 6:00pm-8:00pm. Both of those are free.

167 Chad Gordon: The Pops Concert is Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, March 12<sup>th</sup> -March 14<sup>th</sup> at the high  
168 school and tickets are still on sale.

169 **9. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

170 **A. REAL ESTATE**

171 **At 7:25pm, Bruce Lee-Clark moved and Chad Gordon seconded that the meeting was adjourned**  
172 **finding that an Executive Session be held on Real Estate as premature public knowledge would place a**  
173 **person involved in the subject matter at a substantial disadvantage. There will be no actions taken on**  
174 **this item when going back into Open Session. The motion carried with Bill Scully absent.**

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179 Respectfully submitted,

180 Nancy H. Lively

181 Secretary

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