

1 **BENNINGTON SELECT BOARD MEETING**

2 **130 RIVER STREET**

3 **BENNINGTON, VERMONT 05201**

4 **AUGUST 9, 2021**

5 **MINUTES**

6 **SELECT BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Jeannie Jenkins-Chair; Jeanne Conner-Vice Chair; Bruce  
7 Lee-Clark; Jim Carroll; Tom Haley; and Gary Corey.

8 **SELECT BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** Sarah Perrin.

9 **ALSO PRESENT:** Stuart Hurd-Town Manager; John Rogers; Jennifer Jasper; Norm LeBlanc; Jack  
10 R.; 6 citizens; Jim Vires-CAT-TV; and Nancy H. Lively-Secretary.

11 At 6:00pm, Ms. Jenkins called the meeting to order and asked those not vaccinated to  
12 wear a mask or social distance if unable to wear a mask, and that there are wipes to wipe down  
13 the microphone if you wish to speak.

14 ***Bruce Lee-Clark moved and Tom Haley seconded to remove #4. COVID Update from***  
15 ***tonight's Agenda with plans to reschedule for the September 13, 2021 Board Meeting.***

16 Any questions for Dr. Dobson should be sent to Ms. Jenkins by Wednesday morning for  
17 her to send to Dr. Dobson for him to respond to. Mr. Hurd will then post the questions and  
18 responses on the Town website.

19 ***The motion carried with Sarah Perrin absent.***

20 **1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

21 The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all present.

22 **2. VISION STATEMENT**

23 Ms. Conner read the Town's Vision Statement that was adopted by the Select Board on  
24 August 24, 2020:

25 "Bennington is a welcoming, engaged, inclusive, resilient community where everyone  
26 regardless of identity shares in our vitality and benefits from an outstanding quality of life."

27 **3. CONSENT AGENDA**

28 **A. MINUTES OF JULY 26, 2021**

29 **B. WARRANTS**

30 *Bruce Lee-Clark moved and Tom Haley seconded to approve the Consent Agenda with*  
31 *the Minutes of July 26, 2021 amended as follows:*

32 *Line 147, Change "future." to "future - working on fixing the age discrepancies*  
33 *between the Senior Center and the YMCA."*

34 *The motion carried with Sarah Perrin absent.*

35 **4. COVID UPDATE**

36 Rescheduled for the September 13, 2021 Board Meeting.

37 **5. PUBLIC COMMENT**

38 The following Public Comment Practices to make the experience for all involved a  
39 productive and informative use of the Public Comment period at Select Board meetings was  
40 placed on the podium for those that wish to make Public Comments to reference:

- 41 1. Public Comment is to allow residents an opportunity to share information or  
42 make announcements that benefit the community at large.
- 43 2. The topic should **not** be related to an agenda item. If a member of the public  
44 wants to comment on an agenda item they can do so during the discussion of  
45 that item.
- 46 3. Comments should be 3 minutes or less.
- 47 4. You are required to state your real name and town of residence.
- 48 5. Sharing comments, announcements and concerns are encouraged rather than  
49 asking questions. Public Comment is not a time for discussion. If you have  
50 specific questions it is best to call the Town Manager to get a full explanation  
51 and accurate information.
- 52 6. If the topic requires much discussion the item will be considered as an agenda  
53 item at a future meeting.

54 Norm LeBlanc, Commander of the Local VFW, reminded everyone of the sacrifices those  
55 overseas and their families are enduring. The VFW, Bennington Elks Club, Bennington Eagles  
56 Club, American Legion, Lions Club, and the Rotary are gathering any small items that are listed  
57 on the flier, in the Bennington Banner, and on their respective websites to be sent to our  
58 troops. They will be collecting these until August 12<sup>th</sup>. "It's the little things that matter."

59 -----  
60 Jack R. commented that "the justification of requiring an individual's real name for  
61 Public Comments doesn't fit the Vision Statement".  
62 -----

63 John Rogers noted that the housing for recovery that Turning Point is working on is very  
64 beneficial to those in recovery but the strict accountability requirements are not a fit for  
65 everyone. Pathway Vermont works with the group that are not ready to sign onto the tight  
66 restrictions. They have presence in counties within the State and are working on coming to  
67 Bennington County. Mr. Rogers shared a local success story that was spearheaded by Pathway  
68 Vermont. On August 21<sup>st</sup>, everyone has been invited to a Walloomsac River Walk at 10:00am  
69 followed by a meet-and-greet with the founder of Pathway Vermont at the Mission City Church  
70 at 11:30am.

71

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72 Jennifer Jasper, Executive Director of the Bennington Performing Arts Center (BPAC) -  
73 Oldcastle Theatre Company shared the following:

- 74 ○ We reopened in May after being closed for a year and attendance is up.
- 75 ○ Our tickets are \$25 this year.
- 76 ○ Visiting Mr. Green was our first show of the season and averaged 60 people per  
77 performance.
- 78 ○ We were grant funded for a new heat pump and air cleaners that have been  
79 installed for an air exchange rate of 8 times/hour.
- 80 ○ We encourage mask wearing but it is not mandated. Staff are masked and  
81 sanitize between productions.
- 82 ○ The upcoming productions were shared with the final summer performance on  
83 Labor Day Weekend.
- 84 ○ Community partners include the Bennington Bookshop and W. Collective, as well  
85 as, sponsorships from other local businesses.
- 86 ○ We hope to convince downtown businesses to stay open after 9:00pm so that  
87 theatre goers have a place to go after the performances.
- 88 ○ The Bennington Community Theatre season begins in September with many  
89 community and educational events. Their admission is \$10.
- 90 ○ Contact information is [www.bpacvt.org](http://www.bpacvt.org); Facebook; or 802-447-0564.

91 Mr. Hurd stated that Shakespeare's Will was "fantastic" and Ms. Conner will be going  
92 Thursday.

## 93 **6. COMMUNITY POLICING UPDATE**

### 94 **A. FIRST READING - EMPLOYEE NEPOTISM AND FRATERNIZATION**

95 Mr. Lee-Clark stated the following:

- 96 ● The first reading of Employee Nepotism and Fraternization has been reviewed by  
97 the Town's attorney, State's attorney, and the Bennington Police Chief.
- 98 ● The Committee that worked on this policy with Mr. Monks, Mr. Ferrara, and Mr.  
99 Lee-Clark were Lon McClintock, Kara Lusa, and John Pike.

- 100 • The Town’s attorney suggested the following on Ill. Policy; A. Nepotism; “1. The
- 101 BPD shall not hire any person(s) fitting the definition of “Closely Related
- 102 Individuals” without consideration and approval by the Town Manager after
- 103 consultation with the Select Board.”
- 104 • Send any suggestions to Mr. Lee-Clark by August 17<sup>th</sup>.
- 105 • The 2<sup>nd</sup> reading on this policy will be at the August 23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting.

106 **B. UPDATE**

107 Ms. Conner reported:

- 108 • Task Force applications are being accepted from community members - those that live
- 109 and/or work in Bennington - must be in at the end of business on August 20<sup>th</sup>.
- 110 • We are requiring one reference or recommendation from a co-worker, boss, or
- 111 someone who has worked with you on a board.
- 112 • Interviews will take place in September and we are “shooting for” an 11-person board.
- 113 • The Task Force will be researching a Citizen Review Board Model.

114 Ms. Conner added that she, Ms. Jenkins, and Mr. Lee-Clark are the Working Group and  
 115 have been meeting weekly for 1 ½ years. They have been deeply involved in the process, so if  
 116 anyone has any questions, they are encouraged to reach out to any of the three.

117 **7. SET TAX RATES**

118 Mr. Hurd explained the following on the tax rates:

- 119 ➤ The General Fund - all properties = \$0.7862, an increase of \$0.0322
- 120 ➤ The Highway Fund - all properties except the Villages of Old Bennington and North
- 121 Bennington = \$0.4010, a decrease of \$0.0032
- 122 ➤ The Fire Fund - all properties in the Village of Bennington and Old Bennington excluding
- 123 the Village of North Bennington and Bennington Rural Fire District No. 1 = \$0.0833, a
- 124 decrease of \$0.0009
- 125 ➤ Total = \$1.2705, an increase of \$0.0281
- 126 ➤ When calculated as a percent increase, the rate increase equals a 2.26% increase

127 ***Bruce Lee-Clark moved and Jeanne Conner seconded to approve the following FY2022 Tax***  
 128 ***Rates:***

129	<b><i>General Fund -</i></b>	<b><i>\$0.7862</i></b>
130	<b><i>Highway Fund -</i></b>	<b><i>\$0.4010</i></b>
131	<b><i>Fire Fund -</i></b>	<b><i><u>\$0.0833</u></i></b>
132	<b><i>TOTAL -</i></b>	<b><i>\$1.2705</i></b>

133 ***The motion carried with Sarah Perrin absent.***

134 **8. MANAGER'S REPORT**

135 Mr. Hurd reported the following:

136 ❖ E911 Municipal Contact -

137 *Jeanne Conner moved and Bruce Lee-Clark seconded to designate Deb Madden as*  
138 *Bennington's E911 Municipal Contact. The motion carried with Sarah Perrin absent.*

139 ❖ Bennington Battle Day Parade - Will take place on Sunday, August 15<sup>th</sup>, beginning at  
140 12:30pm and is expected to last about an hour with no judging to take place.

141  
142 ❖ Town Offices Hours of Operation - After a two month review, the Town Offices will be  
143 open from 7:30am until 4:30pm beginning on August 17<sup>th</sup>.

144  
145 ❖ Construction Project Update - It is possible that paving will take place August 3<sup>rd</sup> or  
146 August 4<sup>th</sup>. These projects include the PFOA related projects, the south end project (a  
147 water pressure improvement project), and the lead service line replacement projects.

148  
149 ❖ National Night Out - Was well attended and a good time was had by all.

150

151 In addition:

152 ✓ The VTRANS Route 9 Bridge replacement is moving along slowly with engineers  
153 working on the scope of work and meeting with the land owners. It is scheduled  
154 for 2023.

155 ✓ The Community Development Report that is in the Board packets is worth  
156 reading. Kudos to Ms. Barsotti for the work that she does.

157 **9. UPCOMING AGENDA**

158 August 23, 2021 - Policy 1<sup>st</sup> Reading - Code of Conduct

159 August 23, 2021 - Policy 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading - Employee Nepotism and Fraternization

160 August 23, 2021 - Senior Center Follow-Up

161 August 23, 2021 - 1<sup>st</sup> Set of Procedures from the Bennington Police Department

162 The Board will be looking at the Community Survey within the next couple of weeks with  
163 the hope that it will be going out to the public in mid-September.

164 **10. OTHER BUSINESS**

165 Mr. Lee-Clark: Thanked the Chamber of Commerce and the other organizers, the  
166 sponsors, and the owner of the lot where the Home Brew Fest took place this past Saturday for  
167 a job well done.

168 Ms. Conner: Was asked by the fire fighters to remind everyone that the parade will be  
169 Sunday and all information about the events taking place throughout the weekend is on the  
170 Bennington Fire Department Facebook page.

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172

173 ***At 6:45pm, Jim Carroll moved and Jeanne Conner seconded the adjournment of the***  
174 ***meeting. The motion carried with Sarah Perrin absent.***

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176

177 Respectfully submitted,

178 Nancy H. Lively

179 Secretary

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