

1 **BENNINGTON SELECT BOARD MEETING**

2 **130 RIVER STREET**

3 **BENNINGTON, VERMONT 05201**

4 **SEPTEMBER 12, 2022**

5 **MINUTES**

6 **SELECT BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Jeannie Jenkins-Chair; Jeanne Conner-Vice Chair; Bruce
7 Lee-Clark; Jim Carroll; Sarah Perrin @ 6:45pm; and Tom Haley.

8 **SELECT BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** Gary Corey.

9 **ALSO PRESENT:** Stuart Hurd-Town Manager; Dan Monks-Assistant Town Manager; Shannon
10 Barsotti-Community Development Director; Paul Dansereau-Director of Facilities; Lori Vadakin
11 and Alex Figueroa-UCS; Loni Myran-ACE Project; Sam Restino; Mike Bethel; Kelly Carroll; 5
12 citizens; Jim Vires-CAT-TV; and Nancy H. Lively-Secretary.

13 At 6:00pm, Chair Jeannie Jenkins called the meeting to order.

14 **1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

15 The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

16 **2. VISION STATEMENT**

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

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

21 **3. CONSENT AGENDA**

22 **A. MINUTES OF AUGUST 22, 2022**

23 **B. WARRANTS**

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

26 *Line 117, Change "Director UCS" to "Director of Substance Use Disorders Services at*
27 *UCS"*

28 *Line 141, Change "Line" to "Alliance"*

29 *The motion carried with Gary Corey and Sarah Perrin absent.*

30 **4. PUBLIC COMMENT**

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

34 1. Public Comment is to allow residents an opportunity to share information or make
35 announcements that benefit the community at large.

36 2. The topic should not be related to an agenda item. If a member of the public wants to
37 comment on an agenda item they can do so during the discussion of that item.

38 3. Comments should be 3 minutes or less.

39 4. You are required to state your real name and town of residence.

40 5. Sharing comments, announcements and concerns are encouraged rather than asking
41 questions. Public Comment is not a time for discussion. If you have specific questions it is best
42 to call the Town Manager to get a full explanation and accurate information.

43 6. If the topic requires much discussion the item will be considered as an agenda item at a
44 future meeting.

45

46 Sam Restino: Had the following comments:

- 47 • Citizens should adopt a storm drain grate to keep it clean.
- 48 • The sewer project is on both Benmont Avenue and County Street.
- 49 • Wasn't aware that any of the Riverwalk wasn't town property.
- 50 • Is concerned about our water supply given the current drought.
- 51 • Taxpayers shouldn't pay for other people's trash.
- 52 • Is there an ordinance against 'dead weight storage' in town parking lots?
- 53 • There should be a 'code blue alert' when the temperature is below 32° so we can get
54 the homeless to a shelter.
- 55 • We need private funding and shouldn't totally rely on grants.

56 Mike Bethel: Is against resurrecting the Benn High building and should use the ARPA funds for a
57 gym at the Rec Center instead. Will there be a vote on this? *There will be a public meeting in*
58 *October on the Benn High project and the decision has been made to allocate a portion of the*
59 *ARPA funds to this project. UCS was never to provide a gym at the Rec Center - there was*
60 *discussion to bond for a gym that the tax payers would pay for. There will not be a vote on the*
61 *project as is.* Mr. Bethel requested that the public meeting in October have telephone access.

62 Kelly Carroll: Event reminders:

- 63 • September 17th - Walloomsac Downtown Riverwalk starts at People's Park at
64 10:00am. It will be hosted by Turning Point with discussion, coffee and pie at the end
65 of the walk at the Splash Pad.
- 66 • September 17th - VFW 2nd Annual Adult Scavenger Hunt from noon to 5:00pm. VFW
67 membership is not required but participants must be 21 years old and the cost is
68 \$5/participant that will go to the winner.

69 5. UCS SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER SERVICES

70 Alex Figueroa, Assistant Director of Substance Use Disorder Services at United
71 Counseling Service (UCS) and Lori Vadakin, Division Director of Outpatient Mental Health and
72 Substance Use Services (UCS) did the following presentation:

- 73 ➤ UCS is recognized by the Vermont Department of Substance Use (VDSU) to provide
74 substance use services; i.e., counseling, group therapy, case management, care
75 coordination, and an Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP).
- 76 ➤ We work with partners at Turning Point to provide Narcan and fentanyl test strips that
77 will test drugs for the presence of fentanyl. These are also available at UCS.
- 78 ➤ We will be relaunching our Rocking Horse program on October 19th for pregnant women
79 who are at risk.
- 80 ➤ Our Public Inebriate Program (PIP) is for those that have had public intoxication and
81 provides a safe space for them to "sober up".
- 82 ➤ We also have an Emergency Substance Use Disorder program to provide services to
83 those that are in crisis.
- 84 ➤ The last quarter as of August 31st we received 35 crisis calls and 51 general SUD
85 consultations.
- 86 ➤ Post COVID, UCS began a program called Finding Access to Services and Treatment
87 (FAST) so people can receive treatment the same day. Bennington began this program
88 and we are now sharing our experiences with other designated agencies in the State.
- 89 ➤ 96% of the people that have come to UCS have been served with this program.
- 90 ➤ We are also starting an EMDR initiative on Fridays during October to treat those
91 experiencing trauma.
- 92 ➤ We also treat dual diagnosis clients, or those that have resorted to substance use to
93 self-medicate their mental health problems and then become addicted.
- 94 ➤ UCS is also having an event on October 21st at the Bennington Performing Arts Theatre
95 where people that have lost someone close to them can come and share their feelings,
96 as well as, share those that have had successes. We will need to check and see if it will
97 be recorded.

98 Loni Myran from the ACE Project shared the following:

- 99 ➤ The ACE Project is an outreach program for overdoses by providing Narcan and home
100 delivery of syringes to keep people safe and reduce the spread of HIV and Hepatitis.

- 101 ➤ ACE’s primary goal is to treat people with respect and educate the community.
102 ➤ If you see syringes on the ground, pick them up while wearing protective gloves and put
103 them in a container until they can be safely disposed of in a sharps container.
104 ➤ “It takes what it takes” for a person to begin recovery. This is a different period of time
105 for each individual.

106 **6. WILLOW PARK UPDATE**

107 Paul Dansereau, Director of Facilities, did the following update:

- 108 ✓ The old play structure has been removed and the new play structures are complete in
109 both the upper and lower playgrounds.
110 ✓ The crushed gravel is the sub-base for the rubber top coat under the slides and
111 pathways which is expected to be done next week. The other areas will have wood
112 chips as a base.
113 ✓ The final landscaping still needs to be done, as well as, the final safety inspection of the
114 play structures.
115 ✓ The projected opening date is in 2 weeks. Announcements for that will go out when the
116 actual date is known.

117 **7. IMPLEMENTING THE TOWN VISION**

118 There will not be an ADA update this evening.

119 *Jim Carroll moved and Bruce Lee-Clark seconded for Tom Haley to be appointed as the*
120 *Select Board liaison to CPARB. The motion carried with Gary Corey absent.*

121 Ms. Jenkins attended the information session on the Inclusion, Diversion, Equity, Action
122 and Leadership (IDEAL) Vermont Program and found it to be something that we should be a
123 part of. Here is what we know so far:

- 124 ❖ We have put together a team that will include 2 members of Town staff (Michele
125 Johnson, HR Director and Dan Monks, Asst. Town Manager), 1 member of SVSU
126 (Jonathan Phipps (Acting Coordinator), and 2 members of the Select Board (Jean Conner
127 and Jeannie Jenkins). There is a slot for another Select Board member if someone is
128 interested.
129 ❖ The Program will go on as long as communities are willing to participate.
130 ❖ There are 2 in-person meetings - the 1st month to meet everyone and the 2nd month for
131 trainings - and the 3rd month is an online chat.
132 ❖ The purpose of the Program is for communities that are already thinking about inclusion
133 and equity.
134 ❖ They have funding for 10 communities a year to receive \$10,000/each to help
135 implement ideas.
136 ❖ We should be proud that we were asked to do this.

137 **8. POLICY ON SIGNS ON PUBLIC LANDS**

138 Mr. Hurd stated that there has been discussion in house and publicly on the number of
139 and eye sore created by the plethora of campaign signs on public property. The Town can
140 legally prohibit such signage and Mr. Hurd read the Public Property Sign Policy from the
141 Secretary of State's office:

142 "Signs Prohibited on Public Property - Except for signs owned and/or maintained by the Town
143 of Bennington, signs of any kind, including but not limited to political campaign signs, are
144 prohibited on all public property.

145 Definitions -

146 SIGN: Any sign, display, or representation which is intended to be visible from a public
147 right-of-way.

148 PUBLIC PROPERTY: Any property owned, leased, held, controlled, and/or maintained by
149 the Town of Bennington, including but not limited to, public parks, highway rights-of-way,
150 public facilities, and municipal buildings and infrastructure.

151 POLITICAL CAMPAIGN SIGN: Any sign with the name, image, or likeness of a candidate
152 for public office."

153 *Board comments/questions answered by Mr. Hurd or Mr. Monks:*

154 Mr. Carroll: Can there be signs that would help the homeless when it's cold or help UCS reach
155 those that need their services? *Yes, if the Town approves and places them.*

156 Ms. Conner: Should the policy contain language on handling signs that are placed on the Town's
157 property without permission? *That isn't necessary and our guidance was to keep it short.*

158 Mr. Lee-Clark: Why a policy instead of an ordinance? *Because the Secretary of State says to do a*
159 *policy and an ordinance takes 60 days before it is effective, so any time it is changed, the change*
160 *isn't effective for 60 days, whereas a policy can be changed at any time. And, we have equal*
161 *authority with either.*

162 Mr. Lee-Clark: Being able to change a policy quickly may also be a disadvantage and encourages
163 eventually making an ordinance for a more long term effect and ease of public notification.

164 ***Sarah Perrin moved and Tom Haley seconded to approve the Public Property Sign***
165 ***Policy as presented.***

166 Sam Restino feels that we should enforce the illegal signs on telephone poles.

167 ***The motion carried with Gary Corey absent.***

168 **9. MANAGER'S REPORT**

169 Mr. Hurd did the following report:

170 ***Tom Haley moved and Jim Carroll seconded to approve waiving the alcohol prohibition***
171 ***for the Fire Department's Annual Clam Bake on November 1, 2022 held at the Fire Facility.***
172 ***The event will be catered by The Dutchman and is not open to the public.***

173 Ms. Conner asked where the liability lies and Mr. Hurd answered with the Town as they
174 are a volunteer fire department. Dutchman's license would also be on the line if they
175 overserved.

176 ***The motion carried with Gary Corey absent.***

177 Liquor and Tobacco Licenses Move Online - An online portal has been created for licensees and
178 Town Clerks as the State moves to a paperless system. Select Board signatures will no long be
179 needed. The Town Clerk will provide a list of new licensees similar to the list now provided for
180 renewals but with more information. It will be part of the Consent Agenda at Select Board
181 meetings. However, we do have a written application for the Couch and Cork that will be
182 circulated for signatures at this time.

183 Benmont Avenue/County Street Sewer Line Replacement - The lower of the two bidders was
184 Casella Construction at \$986,985.00. The contract will follow soon. Benmont Avenue will be
185 worked on in the fall and County Street will be in the spring with the Town assisting to keep
186 cost as low as possible.

187 Survivermont Training Webinar Released - This is a new training opportunity for businesses and
188 organizations presented as a collaboration among the Vermont Department of Health, the
189 Bennington Police Department, the Bennington Rescue Squad, SVMC, and CAT TV. It focuses
190 on three components of preparedness: See Something, Say Something; Run, Hide and Fight;
191 and Stop the Bleed.

192 Distribution of COVID Test Kits - We distributed 200-300 COVID Test Kits on September 9th at
193 the Fire Facility parking lot from 7:00am-8:30am and 3:30pm-5:00pm. Staff volunteered their
194 time at these events. We were given 2,200 kits that expire at the end of October. They are
195 now available at the Town Office, Senior Center, Rec Center, Public Works Department, Police
196 Department, and potentially, the Library for 2 kits/family member, or as many as they need.
197 We welcome the help from any agency that would like to help distributing them.

198 Tax Sales - Tax sales for this year are planned for October 31st and a list of the properties will be
199 available after September 15th. There are financial plans available through the State and Town
200 to have your property removed from the list. Once the attorneys are involved, the full amount
201 due will be required.

202 **9. UPCOMING AGENDA**

203 September 26, 2022 - Bennington Police Department in Executive Session

204 October 10, 2022 - Bennington Police Department Quarterly Report

205 October 10, 2022 - ADA Update

206 **10. OTHER BUSINESS**

207 Ms. Conner: Attended a vigil at Lake Paran sponsored by UCS last Thursday for friends and
208 family of those taken by suicide. It was very moving and talking to those contemplating suicide
209 is very important in helping them. The suicide crisis hotline is 988 and UCS can be called 7
210 days/week, 24 hours/day with any crisis at 802-442-5491.

211 **11. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

212 **A. CONTRACT**

213 **B. REAL ESTATE**

214 *At 7:16pm, Bruce Lee-Clark moved and Jim Carroll seconded that the meeting was*
215 *adjourned finding that an Executive Session be held on a Contract and Real Estate as*
216 *premature public knowledge would place a person involved in the subject matter at a*
217 *substantial disadvantage. There will be no actions taken on these items when going back*
218 *into Open Session. The motion carried unanimously.*

219

220

221 Respectfully submitted,

222 Nancy H. Lively

223 Secretary

224

**SELECT BOARD
MINUTES ADDENDUM**

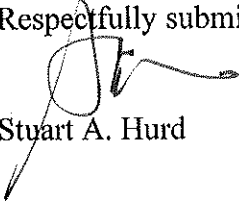
September 12, 2022

Present: Jeannie Jenkins, Chair, Jeanne Conner, V. Chair, Jim Carroll, Tom Haley, Sarah Perrin and Bruce Lee-Clark. Staff present: Stuart Hurd, Town Manager, Dan Monks, Assistant Town Manager, and Shannon Barsotti Absent: Gary Corey

The Board went into executive session at 7:16 pm. for a contract and a real estate matter.

The Board came out of executive session at 7:47 pm. but took no action. There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 7:47 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stuart A. Hurd", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Stuart A. Hurd