

M E E T I N G N O T I C E

BENNINGTON SELECT BOARD

Monday, March 27, 2023

Bennington Fire Facility

Multi-Purpose Room - 3rd Floor

130 River Street

Bennington, Vermont 05201

A G E N D A

6:00 PM

1. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Vision Statement

3. Consent Agenda

6:00 PM - 6:05 PM

A. Minutes of March 27, 2023

B. Warrants

C. Licenses

4. Proclamation

6:05 PM - 6:15 PM

Bennington Career Month

5. Public Comment

6:15 PM - 6:30 PM

6. Public Hearing Notice

6:30 PM - 6:45 PM

CDBG Application for Benn High-Housing

7. Implementing the Town Vision

6:45 PM - 6:55 PM

A. Project Alliance

8. Manager's Report

6:55 PM - 7:05 PM

9. Upcoming Agenda

7:05 PM - 7:10 PM

10. Other Business

7:10 PM - 7:15 PM

11. Executive Session

A. Contracts

We endeavor to host inclusive, accessible events that enable all individuals to engage and participate fully. To request an accommodation or for inquiries about accessibility, please contact Paul Dansereau, Facilities Director: pdansereau@benningtonvt.org or call 802-447-9715.

1 **BENNINGTON SELECT BOARD MEETING**

2 **130 RIVER STREET**

3 **BENNINGTON, VERMONT 05201**

4 **MARCH 13, 2023**

5 **MINUTES**

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

8 **SELECT BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** Gary Corey, Jim Carroll, and Sarah Perrin.

9 **ALSO PRESENT:** Stuart Hurd-Town Manager; Dan Monks-Assistant Town Manager; Shannon
10 Barsotti-Community Development Director; Isabel Harper and David Bond; Debbie Matte;
11 Nancy White; 5 citizens; Josh Boucher-CAT-TV; and Nancy H. Lively-Secretary.

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

13 **1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

14 The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

15 **2. VISION STATEMENT**

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

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

20 **3. CONSENT AGENDA**

21 **A. MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 27, 2023**

22 **B. WARRANTS**

23 **C. LICENSES**

24 *Bruce Lee-Clark moved and Tom Haley seconded to approve the Consent Agenda as*
25 *presented. The motion carried with Gary Corey, Jim Carroll, and Sarah Perrin absent.*

26 **4. PUBLIC COMMENT**

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

- 30 1. Public Comment is to allow residents an opportunity to share information or make
31 announcements that benefit the community at large.
- 32 2. The topic should not be related to an agenda item. If a member of the public wants to
33 comment on an agenda item they can do so during the discussion of that item.
- 34 3. Comments should be 3 minutes or less.
- 35 4. You are required to state your real name and town of residence.
- 36 5. Sharing comments, announcements and concerns are encouraged rather than asking
37 questions. Public Comment is not a time for discussion. If you have specific questions it is best
38 to call the Town Manager to get a full explanation and accurate information.
- 39 6. If the topic requires much discussion the item will be considered as an agenda item at a
40 future meeting.

41 _____
42 _____
43 Debbie Matte:

- 44 • Seniors were told that they would have double the space at the renovated Benn Hi than
45 they currently have. With every update we get less.
- 46 • A bathroom had been taken out but has since been put back in.
- 47 • There isn't a map of the new layout available until April.
- 48 • No one has answered if we would be under the YMCA.
- 49 • Parking will be a problem.
- 50 • Seniors are the fastest growing demographic so we will be needing more space, not less.
51 Shared space is not our space that will be available to us whenever we want it.
- 52 • Went to Hale Resources for a copy of their grant agreement to buy the Benn Hi and
53 there was a "no walk-ins" sign on the door. Requested that the Board get her one.
- 54 • Feels the Town hasn't been honest and up front with the Seniors.

55 *Mr. Monks: We have not made any major changes to the floor plan - no reduction in*
56 *square footage or removal of a bathroom. Only minor adjustments as required by Historic*
57 *Preservation. Plans haven't been finalized yet, and when they are, they will be posted to the*
58 *public for comment. The Bennington County Regional Commission (BCRC) will be doing a*
59 *parking study but there will be "significantly more parking available to the Seniors than there is*
60 *currently at the Senior Center". And, the Hale application is their own private application. Since*
61 *we have not made any final decisions on the Senior Center, we don't have anything to share and*
62 *are not being dishonest.*

63 *Ms. Barsotti: The Hale grant application is for a Community Development Block Grant.*
64 *These grants are awarded to the Town and sub granted for housing. We have the application -*
65 *actually the pre-application - that can be printed out if you want to see it.*

66 *Mr. Lee-Clark: What do you mean by finalized? Mr. Monks: That there have been some*
67 *minor changes to the original plan and it is “finalized for presentation”. None of these have*
68 *changed any square footage, room functionality, or programming as originally planned.*
69 *Programming for the Seniors is a Select Board decision.*

70 Isabel Harper and David Bond:

- 71 • Reiterated their concern for storing the LGB oil trains stored in Bennington as they are a
72 danger to nearby residents.
- 73 • If they derail, the danger is “catastrophic” as it was recently in Ohio. This was a
74 controlled burn for 2 days with road access and the entire community was evacuated.
75 There is no road access to the ones in Bennington.
- 76 • They don’t provide any new jobs or tax revenue to the Town.
- 77 • We would like the Select Board to take a leading role in addressing this problem.

78 *Ms. Jenkins: Please update us on the requests that the Board had asked of you after the*
79 *other presentation. They were to 1. Contact other communities and bring back any actions that*
80 *they have done; 2. Join the Select Board in “bugging” our delegation who still haven’t provided*
81 *the waybill which our Town Counsel has said is the path forward with this. We have also heard*
82 *that these trains are reinforced so if you could also research that if you haven’t already.*

- 83 • We published a 2nd piece in the Banner that went through these requests. We’ve
84 reached out to several communities and though there is concern, there isn’t a lot of
85 precedent on community actions.
- 86 • Portland, Maine had a port where they were loading oil onto the tankers; the
87 community sued on the transportation grounds for the risk to the port and won.

88 *Mr. Lee-Clark: Please send us the citation on the Maine case. We will.*

89 *Ms. Jenkins: It would be more helpful to us if we had a community that had taken action*
90 *with an analogous example of our situation and to reach out to our delegation.*

- 91 • We have reached out to the Vermont Delegation, have sent multiple e-mails, and
92 Senator Sanders staffers have not responded. Welch was just getting set up but we’ll
93 start that again this spring.
- 94 • Is Vermont Railway investing in the spur right now? *Mr. Monks: This is a run-around*
95 *track that replaces the run-around track that used to be closer to Town but became part*
96 *of our Rail Trail Pathway. We have no control over what Vermont Railway does with*
97 *their tracks.*

- Our community should send a letter to the Ohio community acknowledging the similarities to our situations. Their catastrophe is all over the news and Senator Sanders has been very vocal about it.
- We should write the Service Transportation Board. They can change the classification from a spur to a rail yard for storage and this would open it up to more local rules and oversight. *Mr. Monks: The support that Vermont Railway has from the State of Vermont makes it virtually impossible to change the classification from a spur to a rail yard.*
- Senators Campion and Sears are in favor of making a change and recommended that the Select Board or the Federal Delegation do something. *Mr. Monks: Vermont Railway is supported heavily by the State of Vermont. We have tried for 50 years to get the State to help us with the Railway and they have refused saying that the Railway is protected. "That is the reality."*
- If something goes wrong with one of these trains that is the opportune moment to put pressure on all of these groups.

Ms. Jenkins: Mr. Hurd and Mr. Monks could look into what are the two best pressure points and what do we need as partners to make something happen - perhaps a site visit when they're in the area.

Nancy White:

- It is unfair to the Seniors to move them to the Benn Hi where they will be exposed to more people of all ages instead of being secluded on the 2nd floor as they are now. Money is the reason this is being done.
- Who is paying to buy Benn Hi? *Ms. Jenkins: There will be another public meeting in April with an update on the Benn Hi. All parties were present at the last meeting on Benn Hi - the architects, Hale Resources, and the Town - and broke out into separate areas where everyone could stay and ask questions after the presentation. Mr. Monks: The Town has a long term lease agreement with the current owner of Benn Hi. We can assign the lease to whomever we want and we can terminate it whenever we want. It is a method of site control of the property. It has been publicly stated twice and is on the website, that the "most likely scenario" is that Hale Resources will buy the property. It is unlikely that the Town will own the property.*

5. CASELLA CONTRACT EXTENSION

Mr. Hurd explained that our contract with Casella to operate the Transfer Station and the Recycling Depot expired on December 31, 2022. The new contract term officially began on January 1, 2023 and will run through December 31, 2026 and includes new pricing that includes an annual increase at the rate of inflation which will take effect May 1, 2023.

Bruce Lee-Clark moved and Tom Haley seconded to approve the Amendment to Municipal Waste Management Amended and Restated Agreement between the Town of Bennington and Casella Waste Management, Inc. as presented.

Mr. Lee-Clark noted that given the way that waste management has changed and the market for recycling, this makes sense.

The motion carried with Gary Corey, Jim Carroll, and Sarah Perrin absent.

6. IMPLEMENTING THE TOWN VISION

Mr. Haley announced that there will be a CPARB meeting on March 16, 2023 at the Fire Facility beginning at 5:30pm.

7. MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Hurd did the following report:

Queer Connect Pride Event -

Bruce Lee-Clark moved and Tom Haley seconded to close Pleasant Street from North to School Street and School Street from Main Street to Pleasant Street from Noon until 5:00pm on June 25, 2023 for the Queer Connect Pride Event. The motion carried with Gary Corey, Jim Carroll, and Sarah Perrin absent.

Contract 3 Lead Service Line Replacement Project -

Casella Constructions have begun work on Elm Street for the lead line replacement project for a bid price of \$1,251,820.50. This is fully reimbursable by the State of Vermont. Work will be at various places in town and the schedules are in the Banner on Thursday or Friday morning.

Benmont Avenue/County Street Sewer Line Replacement -

This project is essentially finished until Spring. Some lead service lines may need to be replaced in the Spring and the Town hopes to replace the County Street sidewalks in the project area and pave where needed.

Rail Cars -

We are still awaiting the waybill and will get together with counsel when we have that.

8. UPCOMING AGENDA

March 27, 2023 - Bennington Sports Foundation

March 27, 2023 - Chelsea Solar Project

March 27, 2023 - Proclamation

165 Late April 2023 - Skate Park

166 **9. OTHER BUSINESS**

167 Mr. Haley: Drink responsibly on St. Patrick's Day and don't drink and drive.

168 Mr. Lee-Clark: Will there be a curb cut at the beginning of the Rail Trail, and Mr. Monks said yes.

169 Ms. Jenkins: Can there be a paved path from the Fire Facility parking lot to the Rail Trail, and
170 Mr. Monks said yes.

171 **10. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

172 **A. CONTRACT**

173 *At 6:50pm, Bruce Lee-Clark moved and Tom Haley seconded that the meeting was*
174 *adjourned finding that an Executive Session be held on a Contract as premature public*
175 *knowledge would place a person involved in the subject matter at a substantial*
176 *disadvantage. No decision will be taken when going back into Open Session. The motion*
177 *carried with Gary Corey, Jim Carroll, and Sarah Perrin absent.*

178

179

180

181 Respectfully submitted,

182 Nancy H. Lively

183 Secretary

184

TOWN OF BENNINGTON

2023 LICENSE APPLICATIONS

2023 1st Class Renewals

1. Eagles, #1861
2. Fuji Hibachi & Asian Bistro
3. Mt. Anthony Country Club

2023 2nd Class Renewals

1. Hazara Food Mart
2. Walgreens
3. Wal-Mart

2023 3rd Class Renewals

1. Eagles, #1861
2. Mt. Anthony Country Club

2023 Tobacco Renewals

1. Walgreens
2. Wal-Mart

2023 Tobacco & Tobacco Endorsement Renewals

1. Hazara Food Mart

2023 Tobacco Endorsement Renewals

1. Willy's Variety

**The Bennington Select Board hereby approves the above
2023 License Applications
Dated: March 27, 2023**

Jeannette Jenkins, Chair

cc: Town Clerks Office



TOWN OF BENNINGTON

PROCLAMATION Bennington Career Month

WHEREAS, Bennington County Workforce & Education Committee Stakeholders, a robust, grassroots, community-based collaborative inclusive of members from community organizations, institutions, and employers; and

WHEREAS, Bennington County, consistent with State of Vermont as a whole, faces workforce challenges that includes but is not limited to current and forecasted labor shortages, declining labor force participation rates, and mis- conceptions of local job and career pathway opportunities; and

WHEREAS, Bennington County Workforce & Education Committee Stakeholders are instrumental in effectively collaborating on resolving workforce challenges one project at a time; and

WHEREAS, Workforce and Education Committee Stakeholders develop specialized K-Adult continuum of, career pathway exploration projects that help raise awareness of opportunities improving current and future talent pipelines in relation to engagement with the local job economies; and

WHEREAS, Workforce and Education Committee Stakeholders remain keenly in-tuned with project impact evaluation, trends, opportunities, and challenges within the local workforce economy; and

WHEREAS, the month of April is Bennington Career Month, a culmination of events and activities in Bennington County that celebrates career pathway awareness at every level and recognizes the positive impact collaborative workforce development has on labor force, employers and the Bennington County Economy; and

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved that we, the Bennington Select Board, do hereby proclaim the month of April as Bennington Career Month.

Dated at Bennington, Vermont this 27th day of March 2023
Select Board, Town of Bennington, Vermont

Jeannie Jenkins

Jeanne Conner

Jim Carroll

Tom Haley

Bruce C. Lee-Clark

Sarah Perrin

Gary Corey



April Career Month Bennington County Activities 2023

Bennington Career Month Proclamation

Join the Bennington Select Board at their regular meeting on **Monday, March 27** at the Bennington Fire Facility to proclaim April as Bennington Career Month. The Select Board first signed the proclamation in 2019 in honor of the local career exploration and workforce development efforts for youth and adults by the Bennington County Workforce and Education group. The group is one of four working groups of the Bennington County Regional Commission.

Bennington County Works (For Us)!

Bennington Banner columns by area small business owners describing why their businesses and Bennington County are great places to work.

College Fair

The annual College Fair will be held on **Thursday, April 6** from 11:00 am – 12:30 pm at Mount Anthony Union High School gym. The event is open to all area students and parents. Representatives from over 75 colleges will be available to share information.

Business Open Houses

Bennington County Regional Commission invites the public to two open houses at area businesses during April.

VDOL Career Workshops

The Vermont Department of Labor in Bennington holds a range of convenient virtual workshops each month. The schedule for April includes:

Resume Writing: Mondays at 9 am and Wednesdays at 1 pm

Interview Skills: Tuesdays at 9 am and Fridays at 1 pm

Re-employment Strategies: Wednesdays at 9 am

Northshire Career Fair

Local Employers! Please join us for the Northshire Career Expo at Burr & Burton Academy on **Monday, April 10** from 11 - 2:30. From 11-1:30, be prepared to share the outlook of local career options with 9-11 graders who are in the exploratory phase. From 1:30-2:30, feel free to stay for the job fair portion of the event if you have positions to fill at your company.

Molly Stark Career Week

During the **week of April 10th**, learners in grades pre-k – 5th will gather throughout the day in the Molly Stark Library to hear career presentations from local professionals.

The line up for presenters is as follows:

SW Tech Program Fair and Community Open House

In celebration of April Career Month, Southwest Tech invites all 9th grade students, their parents, any interested students who have never toured campus, and the community to see what SWT offers. Southwest Tech's "Program Fair/Community Open House" will be held on Thursday, **April 26th** from 11:35-1:05 at Southwest Tech and will include demonstrations, hands-on activities, the chance to see all 14 programs with their labs and the chance to win some great prizes! Contact Lisa Harrington at 445-4943 for more information.

MAUMS Career Fair

Mount Anthony Union Middle School will host their annual career fair on **Wednesday, April 26** from 8-10 am in the gymnasium at MAUMS. All students in grades 6-8 will have the opportunity to learn about careers in the Bennington community and reflect on the experience in their Personalized Learning Plan (PLP). In addition to the in-person fair, students will have the opportunity to explore additional careers available in the state of Vermont and beyond through the MAUMS virtual career fair.

Financial Reality Fair

Area high school students explore the connects between education and careers and have an opportunity to examine the financial implications of their choices. This interactive event will be held on **Friday, April 28** at MAUHS from 8:30 am – 12:30 pm. Open to all area juniors and seniors in Bennington Co. All participants will receive a copy of the *Promising Pathways* booklet that outlines pathways to high paying careers in Vermont.

Coming up in May

VDOL Job Fest

Connect with local employers and learn about career opportunities on **May 18**, 11 am - 2 pm

MEMORANDUM

To: Bennington Select Board

From: Shannon Barsotti, Community Development Director

Date: March 22, 2022

Re: Benn High VCDP funding public hearing

The Town of Bennington is considering making an application to the State of Vermont for a VCDP Implementation Grant 2023 under the Vermont Community Development Program. A public hearing will be held at 06:00pm on 03/27/2023 at 130 River St 3rd floor Bennington VT 05201 to obtain the views of citizens on community development, to furnish information concerning the amount of funds available and the range of community development activities that may be undertaken under this program, the impact to any historic and archaeological resources that may be affected by the proposed project, and to give affected citizens the opportunity to examine the proposed statement of projected use of these funds.

The proposal is to apply for \$1,000,000 in VCDP funds which will be used to accomplish the following activities: Complete Renovations and upgrades of 650 Main St Bennington VT 05201 (Benn Hi). This building is the former Bennington High School and Middle School that closed in 2004. The building is currently vacant and is recorded on the National Historic Registry through the National Park Service. The building will be converted to a mixed use residential and commercial space.

Copies of the proposed application are available at 111 South St Suite 203 Bennington VT 05201 and may be viewed during the hours of 8am - 4pm. Should you require any special accommodations, please contact Jon Hale at 802 753 3112 Ext 703 to ensure appropriate accommodations are made. For the hearing impaired please call (TTY) #1-800-253-0191.

MANAGER'S REPORT

March 27, 2023

ACTION

Recreation Center Fee Schedule for 2024 and beyond We have discussed this many times. The Recreation Fee schedule is a stagnant document. It remains in place until changed and approved by the Select Board. This creates a situation where changes tend to be big jumps to catch up years past and the fees generated lag behind the cost. Working with the Y and the Assistant Manager, I am proposing the attached fee schedule which is based mostly on a 6% percent increase (the rate of inflation for February 2023) and which will increase annually based on the rate of inflation for February of a given year (CPI-U all cities average). New rates will take effect on July 1 of that year.

Action requested Motion to amend the Recreation Center Fee schedule as shown.

Certificate of Highway Mileage Normally presented in early February, this was overlooked this year. I now present the Certificate of Highway mileage for Board approval. It will then be certified by the Clerk and forwarded to the State.

Action requested Circulate for signatures. (Note that there only 6 lines).

INFORMATIONAL

Municipal Planning Grant Award I am pleased to announce that our Planning Grant application has been awarded in the amount of \$21,160.00.

Pool Chlorine System Modifications We monitor the chlorine levels in the Rec Center pool as we are required to do. We have determined over the last several months that modifications are necessary to enhance the chlorine levels which are being exhausted by the heavy use of the pool. Mark Sawyer and Paul Dansereau are proposing to install UV sanitation which will reduce our chlorine dependence and destroy micro-organisms and will breakdown the chloramines (bad chlorine) which causes skin and eye irritation and will reduce the strong presence of chlorine odor when there is a heavy bather load. The electrical consumption is low, drawing only 3 amps of power about the same as a computer and monitor. It will cost \$7,000, and we should see a significant savings in operating cost.

FOLLOW UP

The Communications Coordinator's Report is attached.

The Police Department Report is attached.

Proposed rates at the Bennington Rec Center, which is included as a membership to the BFYMCA. Benn Res rates do grant full BFYMCA membership privileges. Effective date: July 1, 2023.

We propose that rates will increase annually in line with the Consumer Price Index, (CPI-U all cities average) as of February of a given year rounded up to the next dollar and will take effect on July 1 of that year.

Membership Type	BFYMCA Rate (monthly)**	Current Benn. Res Rate (monthly)	Proposed '23-'24 Benn. Res Rate (monthly)**	New rate, annual with 10% discount
Adult age 25-99*	37	7.40	9	97.20
1-Adult Household, up to 4 children	49	9.8	11	118.80
2-Adult Household, up to 4 children	64	12.8	14	151.20
3-Adult Household, up to 4 children	79	15.8	17	183.60
Young Adult age 20-24	21	4.20	5	54
Teen age 13-19	10	24/year (no monthly option)	n/a	26
Youth age 0-12	5	12/year (no monthly option)	n/a	13

*Senior discount 10%

**10% discount for annual payment

District 1
Certcode 0202-0

CERTIFICATE OF HIGHWAY MILEAGE
YEAR ENDING FEBRUARY 10, 2023

Fill out form, make and file a copy with the Town Clerk, and submit the Mileage Certificate on or before February 20, 2023 to: Vermont Agency of Transportation, Division of Policy, Planning and Intermodal Development, Mapping Section via email to: aot.mileagecertificates@vermont.gov or if necessary via mail to: VTrans PPAID - Mapping Section, 219 North Main Street, Barre VT 05641.

We, the members of the legislative body of BENNINGTON in BENNINGTON County
on an oath state that the mileage of highways, according to Vermont Statutes Annotated, Title 19, Section 305,
added 1985, is as follows:

PART I - CHANGES TOTALS - Please fill in and calculate totals.

Town Highways	Previous Mileage	Added Mileage	Subtracted Mileage	Total	Scenic Highways
Class 1	3.584				0.000
Class 2	12.231				0.000
Class 3	83.85				0.000
State Highway	28.186				0.000
Total	127.851				0.000
* Class 1 Lane	0.038				
* Class 4	3.62				0.000
* Legal Trail	1.95				

* Mileage for Class 1 Lane, Class 4, and Legal Trail classifications are NOT included in total.

PART II - INFORMATION AND DESCRIPTION OF CHANGES SHOWN ABOVE.

1. **NEW HIGHWAYS:** Please attach Selectmen's "Certificate of Completion and Opening".

2. **DISCONTINUED:** Please attach SIGNED copy of proceedings (minutes of meeting).

3. **RECLASSIFIED/REMEASURED:** Please attach SIGNED copy of proceedings (minutes of meeting).

4. **SCENIC HIGHWAYS:** Please attach a copy of order designating/discontinuing Scenic Highways.

IF THERE ARE NO CHANGES IN MILEAGE: Place an X in the box and sign below.

PART III - SIGNATURES - PLEASE SIGN.

Signatures of Selectmen/ Aldermen/ Trustees:

Signature of T/C/V Clerk: _____ Date Filed: _____

Please sign ORIGINAL and return it for Transportation signature.

AGENCY OF TRANSPORTATION APPROVAL: Signed copy will be returned to T/C/V Clerk.

APPROVED:

Representative, Agency of Transportation

DATE:



Town of Bennington

Communications Coordinator Report — March 27, 2023

March: In Like a Lion...

...and lets hope it leaves like a lamb! The vernal equinox arrived to the scene of deep snow which was the remnants of an impressive nor'easter that hit the community earlier this month. What was equally impressive was the Department of Public Works; their crews worked tirelessly to keep streets open and as safe as possible. Our police chief reported many fewer crashes and issues due to the storm than might be expected due to this excellent work.

Get Involved in Your Local Government

Voting Day resulted in the re-election of Sarah Perrin, and the election of Ed Woods. Participation in the vote was lower than we would like, with about 22% of registered voters participating. How did we do outreach to voters? We had several articles in the Banner, regular posts on social media, and frequent mentions at Select Board meetings. While we clearly must continue to do more, we are in line with other Vermont towns such as Milton that had a 23% turnout. One important result of the vote was the passage of the two water bonds to finish State mandated improvements to our water system which will allow those projects to be done quicker and avoid inevitable cost increases that would have resulted from continuing to address the issue on a piecemeal basis.

Letters of Interest for those who would like to serve on a town board or commission are now being accepted. This is a great way to be directly involved in your Town government! For more information, visit the Town website and look under "Government" and select "Join Town Government."

Community Outreach

We had an impressive turnout for our public meeting on the Y Woods. This collaborative effort, led by our Director of Public Works R.J. Joly and partners from the SW Tech Forestry Program and the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation's Bennington County Forester. Thirty to forty members of the public were in

attendance to learn about the proposal for creating a forest management plan for the Y Woods and many comments and suggestions were made to inform the creation of a draft management plan. The ability to provide public comment on the Y Woods, and a recording of the presentation is available on the Town website under the "How do I" section; "Provide Input on the Y Woods."

A public ribbon cutting ceremony is planned for the Rail Trail on May 6, Green Up Day. A short ceremony at the entrance of the trail on River Street next to the Firehouse will occur at 10 am. The Town is partnering with the Bike Hub and probably other community organizations to be part of the ceremony. A community clean up of the trail will immediately follow the ceremony, with the town providing garbage bags and pickup of the collected garbage.

I am coordinating with our Buildings and Grounds team to stay on top of final arrangements regarding the new playgrounds at Willow Park. Completion of this work was delayed when staff discovered issues with the curbing and other punch list items that dragged on until winter prevented it from being completed. We are assured that finishing this work is a top priority from our vendor and we are doing everything we can to hold them to it. Once we have a firm completion date we look forward to finally being able to schedule a re-opening celebration for the playgrounds... ideally as soon as possible.

Organizational Outreach

Work has begun for planning for this year's Battle Day celebrations and I'm assisting the Fire Department who has graciously been leading this effort for what will now be 58 years. I'm also helping amplify Fire Department recruitment efforts including assisting with the promotion of the MayDay Open House which is happening on May 13th.

I've also met with the Communications Director of the SVSU, the director of the Turning Point, and the VP of communications for Bennington College as part of

my effort to improve communications between these organizations. I'm also part of a team supporting a grant request led by GBCS.

I was honored to be the keynote speaker for the Bennington Museum Board of Trustees retreat in Grafton, VT. The focus of my talk was the role of the museum as a premier regional history museum and it's importance to the community, as well as the upcoming 250th commemorations and how the museum has played a role in past commemorations.

Citizen Outreach and Public Record Requests:

I met with citizens sixteen times over this past month on a variety of issues, ideas, and concerns. There was one public record requests to my office.

250th Anniversary Planning:

The Bennington 250th Anniversary steering committee is meeting again this week with a packed agenda. A full committee meeting will be held in April. I have agreed to serve as the chair of the State level VT 250th Education committee, and I also serve on the VT 250th Commission as a commissioner and as part of the executive committee. I traveled to Virginia (paid

by the State) to be one of Vermont's two representatives there for a convening of 24 States 250th planners with over 250 people in attendance. A tremendously valuable conference! I also continue to represent Bennington and Vermont as the facilitator of a regional collaborative of the states of NY, MA, CT, and RI.

Website Development

I continue to work out a few kinks in the new unified town website, but overall the launch has been very successful and I've had a lot of compliments from community members on the new design and usefulness of the site. I welcome suggestions and comments on how we can continue to improve this valuable community resource.

Community Based Learning (CBL) Intern

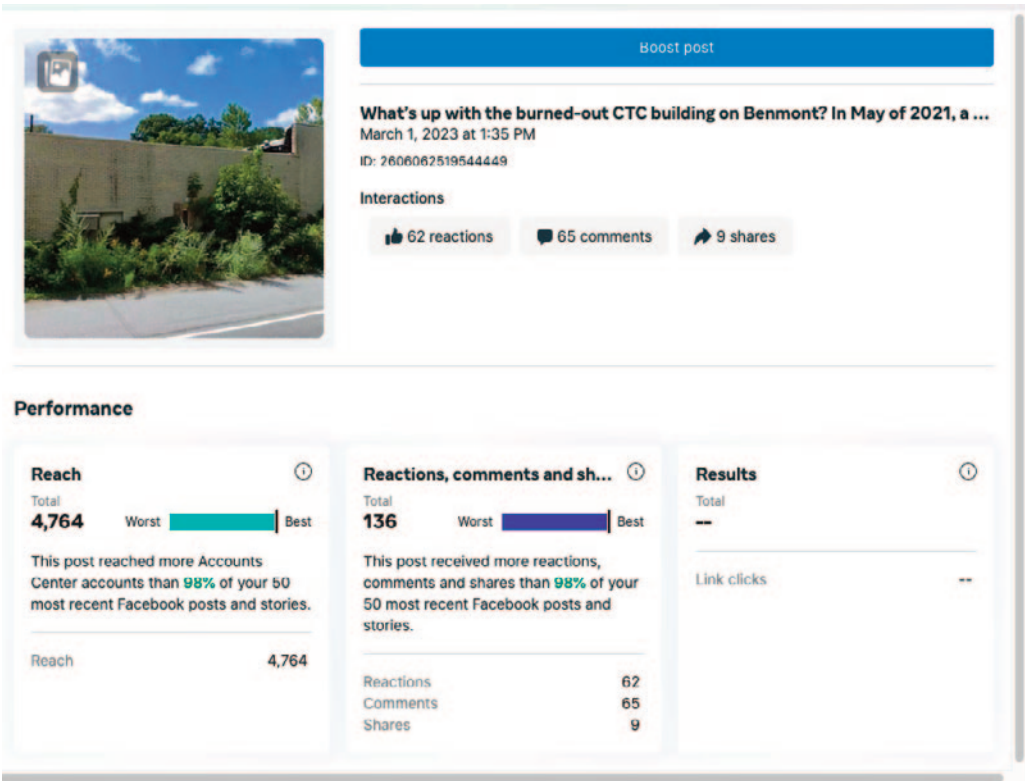
I am working with our Town Clerks Office to host an intern from the SVSU Community Based Learning program. Thomas Scheetz has proven himself to be a very diligent and effective worker! His efforts helping digitize the Town Cemeteries maps are very impressive and will be a real benefit to the town.

Facebook
POST OF THE MONTH:

This month our biggest post was an update on the situation at the former CTC building on Benmont Ave.

This is an issue that has dragged on since May of 2021 and unfortunately does not have a solution in sight anytime soon.

The town HAS been working on this issue since the fire occurred, but the lack of an owner for the site makes the problem very difficult. If you missed the post, you can also read all the details on the Town website under the NEWS section.



Bennington Police Department
Public Safety

Report to the Bennington Select Board

March 2023

Chief Paul Doucette and Lieutenant Camillo Grande represented the Town of Bennington at the Leadership Summit held at Bennington College on March 20, 2023. This three-month project was a result of many issues involving the Town of Bennington and State of Vermont. We looked at substance abuse disorders, homelessness, domestic violence, violent assaultive behaviors and ways to build upon the relationships and communication we currently have with our many community partners and stakeholders. This day long Leadership Summit proved to be very successful and open the eyes of many people in our community. We also focused on the MANY positive things occurring in and around Bennington and the State of Vermont.

The Bennington Police Department continues working closely with the members of the Community Policing Advisory Review Board (CPARB). We attended trainings and were able to present the procedures to go along with the new policy related to Quality Control, Internal Investigations and Discipline. The procedures were outlined on how we handle complaints, investigations and compliments.

Two new employees were sworn in as law enforcement officers and attended the Level II Law Enforcement Basic Training Program. They will be assigned to work with Field Training Officers until their attendance at the Level III training at the Vermont Police Academy beginning in August 2023. We look forward to working with them on professional development.

After many years of service, we returned our Humvee to the State of Vermont as part of a state initiative to reduce the use of military equipment by municipal law enforcement agencies. We had great success with the Humvee over the years using it during weather events, special operations and community engaged events.

Spring and summer events are filling our calendars and we look forward to many community events coming our way. We are also planning New Experience Camp and National Night Out. There are several exciting changes to both of these events!!!! Stay tuned for more information.