

1 **BENNINGTON SELECT BOARD MEETING**

2 **130 RIVER STREET**

3 **BENNINGTON, VERMONT 05201**

4 **FEBRUARY 27, 2023**

5 **MINUTES**

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

8 **SELECT BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** None.

9 **ALSO PRESENT:** Stuart Hurd-Town Manager; Dan Monks-Assistant Town Manager; Lt. Cam  
10 Grande-Bennington Police Department; Bill Karis; Ed Woods; Jenny Dewars-Better Bennington  
11 Corporation; Jack Rossiter-Munley; Kelly Carroll; Donald Washum; Debbie Matte; Nancy White;  
12 5 citizens; Josh Boucher-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 FEBRUARY 13, 2023**

23 **B. WARRANTS**

24 **C. LICENSES**

25 *Bruce Lee-Clark moved and Jim Carroll seconded to approve the Consent Agenda with*  
26 *the Minutes of February 13, 2023 amended as follows.*

27 *Page 4, Line 135, Change “privately owned” to “smaller family owned and non-*  
28 *franchise businesses”*

29 Ms. Jenkins asked how long \$78,000 worth of salt lasts, and Mr. Hurd answered the cost  
30 is \$79-\$80/ton and it depends on the storms. This should get us through the rest of the winter.

31 ***The motion carried unanimously.***

32 **4. PUBLIC COMMENT**

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

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

47 \_\_\_\_\_  
48 \_\_\_\_\_

49 Nancy White:

- 50 • Made a public service announcement by showing the Town Report and encouraging  
51 citizens to go to the Town Office and pick up their copy.
- 52 • Understands doing the sewer replacement on Benmont and County but doesn't  
53 understand what we're paying for it. *Mr. Hurd: Work done on County by town*  
54 *employees came out of either the Highway or Sewer Fund depending on what they were*  
55 *doing; Casella was hired to do the sewer line project that isn't anticipated to be more*  
56 *than \$1M but any lead line work came out of the lead line bucket which doesn't cost the*  
57 *Town anything; the Town will be doing the sidewalk replacement in the spring which*  
58 *was planned to be done anyway and any costs are coming out of the budget and not the*  
59 *reserves.*
- 60 • Is the list of water and sewer projects on the website? *Mr. Hurd: All of the town projects*  
61 *were posted on the website at the time they were being discussed but not sure if they*  
62 *are still there.*
- 63 • Encouraged the public to vote the bond down.

64 Bill Karis, Chair of the Bennington Energy Committee: The Energy Committee plans to table at  
65 the Town Meeting a set of resources for home weatherization to find an option that works for  
66 each individual. We will help people fill out their applications if needed.

67 Jenny Dewars, Executive Director of the Better Bennington Corporation: Her position will soon  
68 be split into two positions and she will become the Director of Events. This doesn't, however,  
69 mean that the number of events will be doubled - it's a shift of responsibilities. Upcoming  
70 events:

- 71           ▪ Pop Up Downtown Saturdays - Saturdays from 11:00am-6:00pm March and April
- 72           ▪ Mayfest and Harvest Fest - applications available at
- 73            [director@betterbennington.com](mailto:director@betterbennington.com)
- 74           ▪ Thursday Night Live - 7 Thursdays to be funded by fundraising
- 75           ▪ Hemmings - going from 4 to 5 events
- 76           ▪ Applying for the Better Places Grant for \$9,000 - new street banners with a
- 77            Bennington theme and art from students of all ages and from everywhere. The
- 78            art will be juried from which 48 will be chosen to go on the banners and the
- 79            artists will be awarded 100 downtown dollars. Anyone can Adopt-A-Banner
- 80            which they will receive after 2 years.

## 81 **5. IMPLEMENTING THE TOWN VISION**

### 82 **B. CPARB UPDATE**

83 Kelly Carroll reported that CPARB had a retreat on Saturday with Brian Corr where  
84 community outreach and team work were discussed at length. We also discussed how we  
85 would review cases since we're not an accountability board. Our next meeting is March 16<sup>th</sup> at  
86 the Fire Facility at 6:00pm where we will be discussing our goals and the location for our June  
87 24<sup>th</sup> listening session. Any questions or comments can be made on the comment section on the  
88 CPARB section of the Town website and will be responded to in a timely fashion. We will have a  
89 meeting with Mr. Spivak on how to get more information to the community.

### 90 **A. BENNINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT (BPD) UPDATE**

91 Lt. Cam Grande did the following presentation:

- 92           ➤ The police department remains very busy.
- 93           ➤ We are working on completing the procedure sections of the Quality Control and
- 94            Internal Investigation Policy with CPARB and Brian Corr. Once complete, they will be
- 95            reviewed by CPARB and ultimately all members of the BPD.
- 96           ➤ The Chief has completed a statistical summary of the 2022 internal affair investigations
- 97            and complaints. There were 6 internal affairs investigations.
- 98           ➤ We also provided information on compliments - there were 15 - the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 2022.
- 99            We weren't tracking them during the 1<sup>st</sup> half of 2022. We receive far more compliments
- 100            than complaints.

- 101 ➤ We have completed the onboarding process for 2 new female patrol officers that have  
102 started this week. They will be going for their Level 2 training and in August will be  
103 going to the Police Academy for Level 3 to be completed in November. They will be on  
104 the road in the community in early 2024.
- 105 ➤ We have been meeting with UCS and a nutritionist on the annual Employee Health and  
106 Wellness services.
- 107 ➤ Our calendars are filling up with the upcoming spring and summer events.
- 108 ➤ The 2023 New Experience Camps will be July 10<sup>th</sup> through July 14<sup>th</sup> with applications  
109 available on April 24<sup>th</sup> at the police station or on the Town's website.
- 110 ➤ Our budget has been submitted and we ask the community to vote in favor of the  
111 Town's budget.

112 *Board comments/questions answered by Lt. Grande:*

113 Mr. Corey: Are you expecting to hire more officers? *We only have 1 more from another State at*  
114 *this time, and after the 2 that have just started, we are still down 6.*

115 Mr. Carroll: Are the 2 new officers from Bennington? *One is from Bennington and the other one*  
116 *is from Rensselaer County.*

117 Ms. Conner: Is it possible to notify the Select Board when there is a swearing in? *Yes, that's a*  
118 *good idea.*

119 Ms. Conner: Has there been any resistance in meeting with a UCS counselor? *We were*  
120 *concerned about that but there hasn't been any push back.*

121 Ms. Conner: Do we have anything here that would replicate the situation in Memphis? *We do*  
122 *not.*

123 Mr. Lee-Clark: Once the Quality Control and Internal Investigation Policy is finalized, will it be on  
124 the website? *Yes.*

125 Mr. Lee-Clark: Do we have any current traffic stop data? *The data for 2020 and 2021 is*  
126 *complete and should be going up on the website soon. We have until August 2023 to complete*  
127 *the data for 2022 and we are working through doing this in our new system.*

128 Mr. Lee-Clark: Where are we on the social worker grant? *The human trafficking position is filled*  
129 *and working well but we have decided to not make that a public figure because of the work that*  
130 *they do. She has put up a training PowerPoint for all officers to watch.*

131 Ms. Jenkins: Is there talk in the legislature on how to accomplish training more efficiently? *The*  
132 *Academy is focused on getting Level 3 officers certified. We get new hires on staff and train*  
133 *them with our certified field training officers to a Level 2 officer. They are then ready for the*  
134 *Level 3 training at the Academy.*

135 Ms. Perrin: How do you see community help with recruitment/retention, or just stay out of the  
136 way? *We encourage anyone interested in becoming a police officer to do their research to*  
137 *understand what it takes to become a Bennington Police Officer. We have officers that want to*  
138 *start recruitment drives and we will always answer any questions.*

139 *Public comments/questions answered by Lt. Grande:*

140 Ed Woods-Trustee of the Village of North Bennington: Thanked the BPD Chief and Mr. Hurd for  
141 their work on the agreement that allowed Bennington residents the additional police security  
142 they voted on 4 years ago.

143 Donald Washum: Verified the 6 internal affairs investigations and that there were law suits out  
144 there. *Yes, there were 6 internal affairs investigations and I cannot comment on any law suits.*  
145 *There is a difference between a complaint and a civil suit.*

146 Jack Rossiter-Munley: Do you know how the 6 internal affairs investigations compares with  
147 other police departments in Vermont, or elsewhere? *I don't know about all agencies but one of*  
148 *the largest ones in Vermont only had 18.*

149 Debbie Matte: Because of the police calls she hears on her scanner, should police officers have  
150 training on how to handle mental health issues? *The Vermont Criminal Justice Council provides*  
151 *a limited training to Level 2 and 3 on mental health. In 2022, all members of the BPD received*  
152 *an additional 8-16 hours of training for mental health first responders.*

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

154 Mr. Hurd did the following report:

155 ***Bruce Lee-Clark moved and Jim Carroll seconded to approve the Letter of Support for***  
156 ***the Better Bennington Corporation's application for the Better Places Grant to fund the 2023***  
157 ***Street Banner Project. The motion carried unanimously.***

158 *5<sup>th</sup> Annual Food Truck Festival* -

159 ***Jim Carroll moved and Tom Haley seconded to close School Street from Main to***  
160 ***Pleasant Street, Pleasant Street from North to School Street from 8:00am until 8:00pm on***  
161 ***August 12, 2023 for the Annual Food Truck Festival. The motion carried with Sarah Perrin***  
162 ***abstaining.***

163 *Solid Waste Implementation Plan (SWIP) Amendment* -

164 The Bennington County Solid Waste Alliance (BCSWA) is proposing to use State funding  
165 to construct a household hazardous waste collection facility at the Bennington Transfer Station.  
166 This requires the 13 towns that make up the BCSWA to amend the SWIP in each member town.

167 ***Bruce Lee-Clark moved and Sarah Perrin seconded to approve the Bennington County***  
168 ***Solid Waste Alliance Solid Waste Implementation Plan amendment as proposed. The motion***  
169 ***carried unanimously.***

170 **7. UPCOMING AGENDA**

171 March 27, 2023 - Bennington Sports Foundation

172 March 27, 2023 - Chelsea Solar Project (postponed as requested)

173 **8. OTHER BUSINESS**

174 Mr. Corey: Absentee ballots are available. Be sure to vote.

175 Mr. Haley: Early ballots are available. Be sure to vote.

176 Mr. Carroll: Congratulations to all involved with the MAUHS Wrestling Team for their win  
177 making it an unprecedented 34 consecutive years as State Champions.

178 Ms. Conner: Come to Town Meeting on March 6<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm and vote on March 7<sup>th</sup>. Polls are  
179 open 7:00am-7:00pm.

180 Ms. Perrin: Vote early and often so she can be re-elected!

181 Mr. Lee-Clark: In addition to being sure to vote, the Community Market will open on March 9<sup>th</sup>  
182 following the ribbon cutting at 11:00am.

183

184 ***At 6:58pm, Jim Carroll moved and Sarah Perrin seconded the adjournment of the***  
185 ***meeting. The motion carried unanimously.***

186

187

188

189 Respectfully submitted,

190 Nancy H. Lively

191 Secretary

192