

1 **BENNINGTON SELECT BOARD MEETING**

2 **130 RIVER STREET**

3 **BENNINGTON, VERMONT 05201**

4 **FEBRUARY 13, 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; Jonah
10 Spivak-Communication Coordinator; Nicole Rogers and Rose O’Brien-VHB Engineers; Katrina
11 Hastings-Sunrise Program Coordinator; Jack Rossiter-Munley; Tordis Isselhardt; Kelly Carroll;
12 Mary Ellen Munley; Donald Washum; Debbie Matte; Asher Edelson; Shirley Adams; Nancy
13 White; 5 citizens; Josh Boucher-CAT-TV; and Nancy H. Lively-Secretary.

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

15 **1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

16 The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

17 **2. VISION STATEMENT**

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

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

22 Ms. Conner added that today is Stuart Hurd’s 50th Anniversary of being employed by the
23 Town and recognized him for his service.

24 **3. CONSENT AGENDA**

25 **A. MINUTES OF JANUARY 14, 2023 AND JANUARY 23, 2023**

26 **B. WARRANTS**

27 **C. LICENSES**

28 *Bruce Lee-Clark moved and Jim Carroll seconded to approve the Consent Agenda as*
29 *submitted. The motion carried unanimously.*

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 Kelly Carroll: The February Riverwalk will be February 18th at 10:00am beginning at People’s
47 Park. The candidates for the Select Board and School Board have been invited and will answer
48 any questions at the Q&A held at the VFW at the end of the walk. Also, the monthly CPARB
49 meeting will be February 16th at the Fire Facility at 6:00pm.

50 Jack Rossiter-Munley: Stated how successful the Community Café is on Saturdays 1:30pm-
51 3:00pm at 121 Depot Street and shared a feel good story about sharing that took place this past
52 week. He added that 40% of the people in the country will have 1 year of their life when they
53 make less money that the federal poverty amount. Also, he is running for the Select Board.

54 Mary Ellen Munley: Bennington Cares is a 2-month old citizen organized group to see what they
55 can do to work with the schools to help with youth mental health services. We have attended a
56 school board meeting, are working with the school leaders on after school programs, sent out
57 fliers to the 70 teachers/employees at Bennington Elementary, developed a relationship with
58 Bennington Aces including transportation for students to be able to participate in Bennington
59 Aces. The next meeting is March 5th at 11:30am at the Union Meeting House on 108 School
60 Street.

61 Donald Washum: Spoke to the mental health and substance abuse issues in the schools and
62 feels that there could be some things put in place so that resorting to calling the police isn’t
63 necessary. Bennington needs to have more emphasis on the treatment of mental health,
64 substance abuse, and a warming shelter for the homeless. “We deserve change.”

65 Debbie Matte: Is concerned about the Senior Center being “stuck under the Y” and being told
66 that we can’t have certain programs at the Senior Center because we’re competing with the Y.
67 She encouraged people to get out and vote and to vote against the budget.

68 Nancy White: Encouraged people to get out and vote and to vote against the budget that has
69 an 8.4% increase. Cuts could have been made but the Select Board chose to not make them. If
70 the budget passes the taxpayers will be subsidizing the Benn Hi for 30 years and Jon Hale is
71 buying 70% of it.

72 Asher Edelson: There is a lot of interest in repairing the sidewalks and would like the priority list
73 for that happening. Mr. Hurd will provide Mr. Edelson with the list and it is also on the website
74 for anyone to see.

75 **5. THREE ROUNDABOUTS - LOCAL CONCERNS MEETING**

76 Nicole Rogers from VHB Engineering Consultants did the following presentation:

- 77 • There are 2 Roundabout Projects - NH-019-1(30) at US Route 7 at VT Route 7A and STP
78 0137(20) Northside Drive and VT Route 7A/Orchard Road/Hicks Road.
- 79 • VSPS2 is a mechanism to identify, prioritize, and select state transportation capital
80 improvement projects on the federal aid system.
- 81 • The VPSP2’s Vision: Develop a performance-based, data driven project selection &
82 prioritization framework that maximizes the “transportation value” delivered to
83 Vermont taxpayers. This will be done through:
 - 84 ✓ Providing a defined, consistent, and transparent process for selecting and
85 prioritizing the projects that ultimately make up VTrans’ Capital Program.
 - 86 ✓ Providing a mechanism for input from the Regional Plan Commission’s (RPC’s), or
87 BCRC for Bennington, and communities in the selection and prioritization of
88 transportation projects.
 - 89 ✓ Utilizing criteria that delineate the “transportation value” that potential and
90 planned VTrans’ projects will provide to the statewide transportation network.
- 91 • These are the areas of criteria with their weighted percentage:
 - 92 ✓ Safety - 20%; Asset Condition - 20%; Mobility and Connectivity - 15%; Economic
93 Access - 10%; Resiliency - 10%; Regional - 10%; Environment - 10%; and Health
94 Access - 5%.
- 95 • Obtain documented support for the advancement of the project as follows:
 - 96 ✓ TAC identifies project as regional priority for VPSP2.
 - 97 ✓ Scoring project based on process to date.
 - 98 ✓ Collaborative refinements to fill gaps.
 - 99 ✓ Standardized reporting to VTrans to document process and refinement.
 - 100 ✓ Project prioritization and advancement to design.

- 101 • The network connectivity of the 3 roundabouts involve all traffic funneling through on
102 their way to Bennington with a regional connector, 4 schools in the area,
103 commercial/industrial corridor, and 4 multimodal pathways.
- 104 • There have been studies done on the intersections since 2002 with the most recent
105 done in 2018 with roundabouts recommended.
- 106 • Existing condition observations and 2012-2016 Crash Report:
 - 107 ✓ US 7 at Kocher Drive - Inefficient intersections resulting in delay; Represents
108 important connection to multimodal path network; and Overbuilt intersections
109 resulting in poor balance of modes and an unwelcoming gateway to
110 Bennington. 56 crashes and 14 injuries.
 - 111 ✓ Northside Drive (Benmont Avenue) at US 7A - Inefficient intersections resulting
112 in delay; Represents important connection to multimodal path network; and
113 Overbuilt intersections resulting in poor balance of modes and an unwelcoming
114 gateway to Bennington. 20 crashes and 2 injuries.
 - 115 ✓ US7A at Hicks Avenue/Orchard Road - Represents important connection to
116 multimodal part network; Poorly defined curb radii resulting in vulnerability for
117 pedestrians; and Inefficient intersections resulting in delay. 59 crashes and 10
118 injuries between mile markers .200 and .500.
- 119 • Intersections are dangerous, inefficient, and unaesthetically appealing.

120 *Board comments/questions answered by Ms. Rogers:*

121 Mr. Corey: Will there be light signals for pedestrians? *The specific designs haven't been "flushed*
122 *out yet" but there would be some kind of accommodations for pedestrians.*

123 Mr. Haley: What kind of traffic management will there be during construction? *A traffic*
124 *management plan will be developed but I don't know what that is at this time.*

125 Ms. Conner: Will these be round roundabouts and not peanut shaped like the one at
126 Bennington College? *Yes, they will be round, and more recent studies will tell us if they will be*
127 *single or multi laned.*

128 Ms. Conner: The two by CVS and McDonald's are close together. Is that an issue? *There may be*
129 *some realignment and they would probably be single laned so they would be smaller because*
130 *traffic is not as heavy at them. Also, their proximity to each other would have a calming effect*
131 *on traffic.*

132 Ms. Conner: Will there be more current crash information which may be lower because of
133 COVID? *We will get more current information realizing that the numbers may be lower and that*
134 *there have been traffic light improvements, as well.*

135 Ms. Perrin: How will this affect the disruption of businesses - some of which are privately
136 owned that depend on this income - during construction? *This is something that will be in our*
137 *report.*

138 Mr. Lee-Clark: Some of the “engineer speak” should be changed so that non-engineer people
139 have a better understanding of what is being said. People don’t know what “mode users” and
140 “multimodal connections” mean. Also, we need more safety on the Rail Trail crossing and the
141 environmental stewardship should be stressed as part of correcting the inefficiencies.
142 *Absolutely on all counts.*

143 *Public comments/questions:*

144 Debbie Matte: When did the crashes occur? *2012-2016.*

145 Mr. Hurd: What timeline are we looking at? *We will do the refinement process and give that to*
146 *VTrans who will give you the project timeline.*

147 Shirley Adams: Is this one project with 3 pieces or 3 separate projects where one may go
148 forward and the other 2 would not? *There are 2 Roundabout Projects - NH-019-1(30) at US*
149 *Route 7 at VT Route 7A and STP 0137(20) Northside Drive and VT Route 7A/Orchard Road/Hicks*
150 *Road.*

151 Ms. Rogers continued her presentation:

152 • Next Steps:

- 153 ✓ We will reword the Project Refinements as suggested by Mr. Lee-Clark.
- 154 ✓ Conduct detailed traffic analyses to determine appropriate alternatives (single
155 lane vs. multilane roundabout) - March 2023
- 156 ✓ Provide updated feasibility analysis (high level impacts and conceptual cost
157 estimate) - March 2023
- 158 ✓ Come back - hopefully with VTrans to give project timeline and estimated cost -
159 to present basic alternatives and their associated risks to
160 schedule/development. Confirm Preferred Alternative and endorsement from
161 Select Board - April 2023
- 162 ✓ Finalize Refinement Report to accompany previously submitted project scoring
- 163 ✓ Project prioritization and advancement to design

164 ***Bruce Lee-Clark moved and Tom Haley seconded that the Select Board agrees in***
165 ***concept with the Purpose and Need Project Statement as follows and look forward to its new***
166 ***iteration:***

167 ***“The Purpose of the Project is to develop transportation system improvements that***
168 ***foster a welcoming gateway which safely and efficiently serves all mode users, while***
169 ***enhancing important multimodal connections.”***

170 ***The motion carried unanimously.***

171 **6. SUNRISE FAMILIES AT THE CENTER PRESENTATION**

172 Katrina Hasting, Program Coordinator at Sunrise Resource Center did the following
173 presentation:

- 174 ➤ Families at the Center bring together navigators and local families with services for a
175 goal of families to promote their well-being and increase their social capital.
- 176 ➤ The definition of Social Capital is ties to make it possible for people and groups of
177 people to share resources, develop social trust, and increase productivity in the
178 community.
- 179 ➤ Bonding Social Capital - within families, friends, neighbors, and groups in the
180 community.
- 181 ➤ Bridging Social Capital - when different social classes and socio-economic groups bridge
182 together.
- 183 ➤ Linking Social Capital - relationships with leaders and public officials.
- 184 ➤ Those with higher social capital are happier, healthier, and find better jobs.
- 185 ➤ Families at the Center started in September 2022 with 12 navigators, 2 CIS social
186 workers, early intervention, SVSU engagement, Headstart, Vermont Center for
187 Independent Living, Homeless Center, and the WIC Department.
- 188 ➤ We have 17 participating families with a goal of serving 20 families/year for the 3 years
189 of this pilot program.
- 190 ➤ The Select Board gave us some ARPA funding, the Vermont Community Foundation has
191 given us funding, we are required to get matching funds to run the 3-year pilot program,
192 and we're always seeking additional funding.
- 193 ➤ The families come in with whatever their issues are and we direct them to where than
194 can get the help and guidance that they need.
- 195 ➤ The hope is that they will commit to the program for a year, they're compensated
196 \$25/hour stipend if they complete a meeting survey, meals are provided as is childcare
197 if needed.
- 198 ➤ We meet quarterly at the State level and are working hard to create change for Vermont
199 families that are using support services within the State.

200 *Board comments/questions answered by Ms. Hastings:*

201 Mr. Lee-Clark: Have you contacted the Greater Bennington Community Services yet? If not,
202 then I recommend contacting Natalie there. *They are not part of the Families at the Center but I*
203 *will reach out to them.*

204 Mr. Lee-Clark: Encourages reaching out to credit unions to establish credit. *Thank you.*

205 Ms. Jenkins: Loves the list of future survey questions that shows the breadth of how you're
206 looking for resources.

207 Ms. Conner: Can families that are just joining able to benefit from the earlier meetings? *Yes,*
208 *there is an onboarding process and the families that have been there will bring the new ones up*
209 *to speed, plus, we may repeat some of the sessions that were done earlier.*

210 *Public comments/questions answered by Ms. Hastings:*

211 Mary Ellen Munley: What is the budget for the Families at the Center and how much of that is
212 paid by the taxpayers? *The Select Board gave \$5,000 of ARPA funding with funding coming from*
213 *other sources that I don't know the amount of now. I can, however, find out and will send that*
214 *to the Board along with the entire presentation.*

215 Mary Ellen Munley: Are the salaries of the navigators in-kind? Yes.

216 Nancy White: Who is getting the \$25/hour? *The participating families for their time at the*
217 *meetings. We started out meeting once/month and now we are meeting twice/month so they*
218 *are getting \$50/month. Families that are getting all of the support services are still below the*
219 *poverty level so we are offering incentives for them to come such as the stipends, meals, and*
220 *childcare.*

221 **7. POLICY - NON-PROFITS AND THE BALLOT**

222 Ms. Jenkins stated that we are reviewing this policy because the Town Manager has
223 spent time reaching out to those agencies that have been on the ballot the year before but
224 haven't supplied the funding request documents to the Town by the due date.

225 Mr. Hurd added that specific dates have been stricken from the Policy so it doesn't need
226 to be revised every year. It is the intent of staff to make what is requested as clear as possible
227 when it goes out to the agencies. The cover letter and policy are sent out to the agencies at the
228 end of October giving them 2 months to respond.

229 ***Bruce Lee-Clark moved and Jim Carroll seconded to make the changes identified in the***
230 ***Cover Letter and Policy as follows, and to approve as rewritten:***

231 ***Cover Letter - At the end of the 1st paragraph, Add, "If submitted materials require***
232 ***revision, the changes must be submitted prior to the deadline for the request to be included***
233 ***on the ballot."***

234 ***Cover Letter - 2nd paragraph, Change "invited" to "strongly encouraged"***

235 ***Policy - 4th paragraph, Line 2, Delete "2024 (July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024)"***

236 ***Policy - 4th paragraph, Line 4, Delete "Monday, December 5, 2022"***

237 ***Policy - 4th paragraph, Line 4, Add "6 weeks (42 days) prior to the statutory deadline***
238 ***for articles to be petitioned."***

239 ***Policy - 4th paragraph, Line 6, Add "Those failing to meet the deadline must petition."***

240 ***Policy - 4th paragraph, Line 7, Change "invited" to "strongly encouraged"***

241 ***Policy - 5th paragraph, Line 2, Delete "2024 (July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024)"***

- 242 **Policy - 5th paragraph, Line 3, Delete “Monday, December 5, 2022”**
- 243 **Policy - 5th paragraph, Line 2, Change “following” to “listed below”**
- 244 **Policy - 5th paragraph, Line 4, Add “the first Monday in December”**
- 245 **Policy - 5th paragraph, Line 4, Change “invited” to “strongly encouraged”**
- 246 **Policy - 6th paragraph, Line 1, Change “The documents requested are:” to “The**
- 247 **required documents are””**

248 Nancy White: Will the agencies clearly understand that if they don’t have their documents in by
 249 the deadline that they will be off the ballot unless they petition? *Yes. That is the intent of the*
 250 *changes.*

251 Nancy White: This is the first year they weren’t at the budget meetings. Were they invited? *The*
 252 *ones in the budget come to the budget meetings and the ones on the ballot come to the Town*
 253 *Meeting.*

254 ***The motion carried unanimously.***

255 **8. TIF DISTRICT ANNUAL REPORT**

256 Mr. Monks stated that we submit a report to the Vermont Economic Progress Council
 257 (VEPC) every year. Bennington has not bonded for any improvements yet, no tax increment has
 258 been retained, and the TIF District taxable values have increased modestly by about \$129,000.
 259 Grand List values as of April 2021 must be used in the FY2022 TIF Report. The report will be
 260 sent to VEPC once the Select Board acknowledges receipt of the report.

261 ***Jim Carroll moved and Sarah Perrin seconded to acknowledge receipt of the FY2022 TIF***
 262 ***Report. The motion carried unanimously.***

263 **9. IMPLEMENTING THE TOWN VISION**

264 Mr. Haley reiterated that the next CPARB meeting will be February 16, 2023 at the Fire
 265 Facility at 6:00pm.

266 **10. MANAGER’S REPORT**

267 Mr. Hurd did the following report:

268 **BBC Street Closings - Mayfest and Harvest Fest -**

269 ***Bruce Lee-Clark moved and Jim Carroll seconded to close Main Street from the Four***
 270 ***Corners east to Valentine Street, School Street from Main to Pleasant Street, Pleasant Street***
 271 ***from North to School Street and Silver Street from Main to Union Street from 6:00am until***
 272 ***6:00pm on May 27, 2023 for Mayfest and on October 14, 2023 for Harvest Fest. The motion***
 273 ***carried unanimously.***

274 Bond Loan Agreement Burgess Road Pressure Reducing Valve (PRV) Project -

275 ***Bruce Lee-Clark moved and Jim Carroll seconded to approve the Bond Loan Agreement***
276 ***Burgess Road Pressure Reducing Valve (PRV) Project and adopt the Resolution and Certificate***
277 ***without reading for reimbursement of engineering expenses in the amount of \$55,380.00.***
278 ***The motion carried unanimously.***

279 Armory/Bowen Road Trade - We have mutually agreed to accept the purchase price of
280 \$230,000 for the lands on Bowen Road on or about March 15, 2023. This money will be
281 reserved and held to be returned to the National Guard when all relevant paperwork is
282 completed for the Armory to be transferred to the Town. We have re-noticed the sale of the
283 land and will occupy the Armory in 2025.

284 Contract 3 Lead Service Line Replacement Project - Bids have been opened, reviewed by MSK
285 and we are preparing to issue the Notice of Intent to Award to Casella Construction at a bid
286 price of \$1,251,820.50 which will be reimbursed. Work is to start in March 2023, weather
287 permitting.

288 Food Truck Event - Is scheduled for August 12th Battle Days weekend. Street closures will
289 probably be in the next Manager's Report.

290 Benmont Avenue/County Street Sewer Line Replacement - This project is essentially finished
291 until Spring when some lead service lines may need to be replaced and the Town hopes to
292 replace the County Street sidewalks and pave where needed.

293 Rail Cars - Have moved and the Town has requested and is awaiting the waybill. When received
294 we will get together with counsel. We expect this to be an ongoing problem.

295 **11. UPCOMING AGENDA**

296 February 27, 2023 - Bennington Police Department Report

297 February 27, 2023 - Malone Solar Project

298 February 27, 2023 - Bennington County Solid Waste Alliance Agreement Adoption

299 **12. OTHER BUSINESS**

300 Ms. Perrin: Happy Valentine's Day.

301 Ms. Jenkins: The 2022 Annual Reports are out and on the website. Evan Yadeski was
302 inadvertently left off from the Planning Commission list of members but he is a new, active
303 member.

304 ***At 7:47pm, Jim Carroll moved and Sarah Perrin seconded the adjournment of the***
305 ***meeting. The motion carried unanimously.***

306

307

308

309 Respectfully submitted,

310 Nancy H. Lively

311 Secretary

312