

1 **BENNINGTON SELECT BOARD MEETING**

2 **130 RIVER STREET**

3 **BENNINGTON, VERMONT 05201**

4 **MARCH 27, 2023**

5 **MINUTES**

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

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

9 **ALSO PRESENT:** Stuart Hurd-Town Manager; Dan Monks-Assistant Town Manager; Shannon
10 Barsotti-Community Development Director; Jonah Spivak-Communications Coordinator; Wendy
11 Morse and Bill Colvin-Bennington Career Month Proclamation; Jon and Zak Hale-CDBG
12 Application for Benn High-Housing; Bill Woods; Kelly Carroll; Debbie Matte; Nancy White; 10
13 citizens; Jim Therrien-Bennington Banner; Josh Boucher-CAT-TV; and Nancy H. Lively-Secretary.

14 At 6:00pm, Chair Jeannie Jenkins called the meeting to order and announced that there
15 would not be a Chelsea Solar presentation this evening - it has been rescheduled for May. Also,
16 it is easier to hear if you sit in the first row.

17 **1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

18 The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

19 **2. VISION STATEMENT**

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

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

24 **3. CONSENT AGENDA**

25 **A. MINUTES OF MARCH 13, 2023**

26 **B. WARRANTS**

27 **C. LICENSES**

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

30 **4. PROCLAMATION - BENNINGTON CAREER MONTH**

31 Wendy Morse explained that Bennington Career Month originally started as Bennington
32 Career Week in 2013, moved to Career 2 weeks in 2016, and Career Month in 2017 to recognize
33 career awareness. Events will take place throughout April from the elementary schools to
34 adults.

35 Bill Colvin added that the Bennington County Workforce & Education Committee is
36 under the auspices of the Bennington County Regional Commission. Kudos was given to the
37 Bennington Banner, Jeannie Jenkins, and Wendy Morse for their work and support since the
38 beginning.

39 Ms. Morse read the Proclamation.

40 Ms. Conner noted that there are 17 events scheduled during April.

41 ***The Board signed the Town of Bennington PROCLAMATION Bennington Career Month***
42 ***as presented.***

43 **5. PUBLIC COMMENT**

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

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

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59 **5. PUBLIC COMMENT**

60 Kelly Carroll: On March 31st the VFW Post 13 Riders will be hosting a murder mystery party to
61 benefit Vermont Paws and Boots, an organization that trains service dogs for veterans and first
62 responders. Tickets can be purchased at the VFW for \$20/ticket. Registration begins at 6:0pm,

63 and you choose to be a guest or a character. Its 3 rounds with varying parts of the game
64 covered in each round.

65 Debbie Matte: Stated that she was correct at the last meeting that the bathroom had been
66 removed from the Senior Center area at the Benn Hi and has now been put back at a different
67 location but within the Senior Center section.

68 Nancy White: Has been contacted by several Bennington residents wanting more information
69 on projects that are going on in Bennington so she will be holding a public meeting at the
70 Bennington Free Library on April 18th at 6:00pm.

71 **6. PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE - CDBG APPLICATION FOR BENN HI-HOUSING**

72 Ms. Barsotti explained that the proposal is to apply for \$1,000,000 in Vermont
73 Community Development Program (VCDP) funds to complete renovations and upgrades of 650
74 Main Street, Bennington, VT 05201 (Benn Hi). The building is currently vacant and is recorded
75 on the National Historic Registry through the National Park Service. The building will be
76 converted to a mixed use residential and commercial space. These funds are federal funds to
77 the State that flows through the Town for sub grants for HUD affordable housing and other
78 community development programs.

79 Jon Hale stated the application must be submitted by April 11th with a decision as to
80 what applicants will receive the grant made in June. Only one application per municipality will
81 be awarded, and Hale Resources are the only applicants from Bennington in this round.

82 *Public comments/questions answered by Jon or Zak Hale:*

83 Nancy White: Who will own the Benn Hi building? *Ms. Jenkins: This is a grant application and*
84 *there will be an update on the Benn Hi building on April 24th.*

85 Nancy White: No one should be placed in the Benn Hi basement because, if there were an
86 emergency, they would be trapped. *Zak Hale: We want to put a 66 child care area in the*
87 *basement and there are above ground windows. Jon Hale: Noted that there are strict code*
88 *requirements - especially for child care - that must be met on ingress and egress before we*
89 *would be granted a Certificate of Occupancy. Mr. Monks: There were class rooms in the*
90 *basement when it was a school.*

91 ***Bruce Lee-Clark moved and Sarah Perrin seconded to approve the Resolution for Hale***
92 ***Resources to apply for the VCDP Grant for \$1,000,000.00 as presented. The motion carried***
93 ***unanimously.***

94 **7. IMPLEMENTING THE TOWN VISION**

95 **A. PROJECT ALLIANCE**

96 Ms. Jenkins stated the following:

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- There was a meeting 1 ½ weeks ago to address the following issues:
 - Substance Misuse
 - Homelessness
 - Mental Health Concerns
 - An Uptick in Violence
 - The meeting was planned by some State and Local groups and attendance was by invitation only.
 - The people were mostly from Bennington but it was also attended by others in Southern Vermont including Brattleboro and Springfield, as well as, from the State. However, the meeting was about Bennington.
 - It brought together education, social service organizations, town government (Mr. Hurd and Ms. Barsotti), housing (Zak Hale), and police (Chief Doucette).
 - The meeting came from us being approached by the Committee on Public Safety and the Governor’s Office.
 - Bennington was one of the towns on the State’s “Heat Map” which highlights communities that are in crisis in areas of violence and drug issues.
 - We were chosen - even though we were 5th on the Map - because of our strides to address the issues with the Opioid Task Force.
 - The goal is to develop a Leadership Team to help us decide what resources we need and how we might achieve a solution.
 - Discussions utilized 5 focus areas:
 - Housing
 - Education
 - Police
 - Lived Experience/Recovery
 - Treatment
 - Each one of these focus areas has next steps for implementation that will involve the entire community.
 - There is a Planning Group that is organizing the next steps.
 - The hope is to use this model for other communities and Bennington is lucky that we were chosen.
 - All that attended were given a copy of the book, Bleeding Out.
 - Except for the breakout sessions, it was filmed by CAT-TV.

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131 Ms. Jenkins reminded everyone that there are 15 open seats on Boards and
132 Commissions and urged those interested to get involved. Mr. Hurd added that applications
133 need to be to the Town Office by May 1st. The Select Board will interview the new candidates
134 but not the incumbents. The Board of Listers is the only one that doesn’t have an opening.

135 **8. MANAGER’S REPORT**

136 Mr. Hurd did the following report:

137 Recreation Center Fee Schedule for 2024 and Beyond -

138 We are proposing the attached fee schedule which is based mostly on 6% increase (the
139 rate of inflation for February 2023) and will increase annually based on the rate of inflation for
140 February of a given year (CPI-U all cities average). The will eliminate being stagnant for a few
141 years and then making a big jump. The new rates will take effect on July 1st of each year.

142 ***Bruce Lee-Clark moved and Jim Carroll seconded to amend the Recreation Center Fee***
143 ***Schedule as presented.***

144 Mr. Corey questioned a couple of the increases and Mr. Hurd explained the process.

145 ***The motion carried unanimously.***

146 Certificate of Highway Mileage -

147 This is normally presented in early February but was overlooked this year. There are no
148 changes and, after the Board signs, it will be certified by the Clerk and forwarded to the State.

149 Municipal Planning Grant Award -

150 We were awarded the Municipal Planning Grant in the amount of \$21,160.00 for the
151 update of the Town Plan.

152 Pool Chlorine System Modifications -

153 Due to the excessive use of the pool, we are proposing to install UV sanitation which will
154 reduce our chlorine dependence and destroy micro-organisms. It will breakdown the
155 chloramines (bad chlorine) which causes skin and eye irritation and will reduce the strong
156 presence of chlorine odor when there is a heavy bather load. The electrical consumption is only
157 3 amps - the same as a computer and monitor. It will cost \$7,000, we have the money in the
158 budget, and we should see a significant savings in operating cost.

159 Other -

160 Ms. Conner asked when construction would resume at Willow Park, and Mr. Spivak
161 answered that we will be meeting with the project manager on Thursday next week when a
162 renewed construction date will be decided.

163 **9. UPCOMING AGENDA**

164 April 10, 2023 - Reorganization

165 April 10, 2023 - Bennington Sports Foundation

166 April 24, 2023 - Benn Hi Update

167 May 2023 - Chelsea Solar

168 **10. OTHER BUSINESS**

169 Board members paid tribute to Mr. Lee-Clark as this is his last meeting:

170 Ms. Jenkins: An amazingly engaged and active Select Board member with an impact on
171 community policing, energy policies, and trying to get people to vote.

172 Ms. Conner: Agrees with Ms. Jenkins and will miss his well thought-out motions.

173 Mr. Carroll: Mr. Lee-Clark was always a great sounding board for him and he will see him later.

174 Mr. Haley: An honor to have served with him and we all have big shoes to fill.

175 Mr. Corey: Fortunate to have served with him and thanked him for his service.

176 Ms. Perrin: Will make her comments out of session.

177 Mr. Lee-Clark added the following:

178 - It has been a privilege to have served on this Board - first appointed and then elected - and
179 a privilege to serve the people of Bennington.

180 - All too often we don't see what a wonderful place Bennington is, and the ones that have
181 been here the longest don't say it to each other. The newcomers see it more so let's try to
182 do better.

183 - Chose not to run because he thought there would be new people with new ideas that
184 would run, and he was correct.

185 - We cannot continue to operate a town when 2,000 out of 9,500 people vote.

186 - The Select Board and the towns by the constitution of the State of Vermont and its
187 traditions are not creatures of themselves. They have been created by the State of
188 Vermont, and therefore, are a board of limited powers.

189 - The Select Board has no power or jurisdiction over private property.

190 - It's been a privilege and an honor - thank you.

191 **11. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

192 **A. CONTRACTS**

193 *At 6:51pm, Bruce Lee-Clark moved and Tom Haley seconded that the meeting was*
194 *adjourned finding that an Executive Session be held on a Contracts as premature public*
195 *knowledge would place a person involved in the subject matter at a substantial*
196 *disadvantage. No decision will be taken when going back into Open Session. The motion*
197 *carried unanimously.*

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201 Respectfully submitted,

202 Nancy H. Lively

203 Secretary

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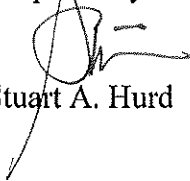
**SELECT BOARD
MINUTES ADDENDUM
March 27, 2023**

Present: Jeannie Jenkins, Chair, Tom Haley, Jim Carroll, Bruce Lee- Clark, Jeanne Conner, V. Chair, Gary Corey, and Sarah Perrin. Also present.: Stu Hurd, Town Manager

The Board went into executive session at 6:50 pm for a contractual matter.

The Board came out of executive session at 7:04 pm. but took no action. There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 7:04 pm.

Respectfully submitted,


Stuart A. Hurd

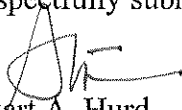
SELECT BOARD
MINUTES
March 31, 2023

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

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 am. The sole purpose of the meeting was to consider alcohol and tobacco licenses. On a motion by Bruce Lee-Clark, seconded by Tom Haley, the Board voted unanimously to approve the list of licenses.

There being no other business, the Board voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:02 am.

Respectfully submitted,



Stuart A. Hurd