

M E E T I N G N O T I C E
BENNINGTON SELECT BOARD
Monday, October 25, 2021
Bennington Fire Facility
Multi-Purpose Room - 3rd Floor
130 River Street
Bennington, VT 05201
A G E N D A
6:00 PM

1. Pledge of Allegiance
2. Vision Statement
3. Consent Agenda 6:00 PM - 6:10 PM
 - A. Minutes of October 11 and October 19, 2021
 - B. Warrants
4. Public Comment 6:10 PM - 6:25 PM
5. Declaration of Inclusion 6:25 PM - 6:45 PM
 - Bennington Rotary Club
6. Downtown Funding Structure- 6:45 PM - 7:05 PM
 - Continued Discussion
7. Police Procedures Update 7:05 PM - 7:15 PM
8. AT&T Pole Lease 7:15 PM - 7:30 PM
9. Manager's Report 7:30 PM - 7:40 PM
10. Upcoming Agendas 7:40 PM - 7:45 PM
11. Other Business 7:45 PM - 7:55 PM
12. Executive Session
 - A. Real Estate
 - B. Personnel

1 BENNINGTON SELECT BOARD MEETING

2 130 RIVER STREET

3 BENNINGTON, VERMONT 05201

4 OCTOBER 11, 2021

5 MINUTES

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

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

9 **ALSO PRESENT:** Stuart Hurd-Town Manager; Dan Monks-Assistant Town Manager; Jonah
10 Spivak-Communications Coordinator; Dr. Trey Dobson-Medical Director-SVMC; Susan Plaisance-
11 President and Michael McDonough-Interim Executive Director-BBC; Wendy Morse-Department
12 of Labor and Wendy Callard-Creative Workforce Solutions; Nancy White; Jim Vires-CAT-TV; and
13 Nancy H. Lively-Secretary.

14 At 6:00pm, Ms. Jenkins called the meeting to order and asked those not vaccinated to
15 wear a mask and social distance. There are wipes to wipe down the microphone if you wish to
16 speak.

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 SEPTEMBER 27, 2021 AND OCTOBER 4, 2021**

26 **B. WARRANTS**

27 *Bruce Lee-Clark moved and Gary Corey seconded to approve the Minutes of September*
28 *27, 2021 amended as follows and the Warrants.*

29 *Line 58, Change "People" to "Peoples"*

30 *Line 203, Change "bute" to "but"*

31 *The motion carried with Sarah Perrin abstaining.*

32 *Bruce Lee-Clark moved and Jeanne Conner seconded to approve the Minutes of*
33 *October 4, 2021 as presented. The motion carried with Gary Corey abstaining.*

34 **4. COVID UPDATE**

35 Dr. Trey Dobson, SVMC Medical Director, did the following presentation:

- 36 • Vermont is seeing a steady number of cases over the last 6 weeks with 35-40 patients
- 37 hospitalized each day.
- 38 • There are more cases and less hospitalization.
- 39 • In Vermont, for every 100 people tested, 3 of them are positive, whereas nationally, it's
- 40 6 out of every 100.
- 41 • There are trials currently taking place for an oral antiviral treatment.
- 42 • Treatment must be administered in the early stages of the disease and will never take
- 43 the place of vaccination.
- 44 • The vaccine will be available for the 5-11 year olds in the beginning of November, and
- 45 the 3rd shot is available now to those that qualify for it.
- 46 • The 3rd shot will be available to everyone in the beginning of November that received
- 47 their 2nd shot 6 months ago - regardless of whether or not your first 2 shots were Pfizer
- 48 or Moderna.
- 49 • There is additional explanation of the 3rd shot on the SVMC website.
- 50 • Most people are going about life more normally.
- 51 • Masks can be removed when we get a much lower incidence of the virus.

52 *Board questions and comments answered by Dr. Dobson:*

53 Mr. Carroll: Will the 3rd shot be the same as the other two? Yes, at this time with potential
54 changes in the future.

55 Mr. Carroll: Why not only give one shot? Because it is how our systems react to the disease.

56 Mr. Carroll: How is hospital staff reacting to mandatory vaccination? Anyone working with the
57 patients must be vaccinated and the employees not vaccinated due to religious or other
58 exemptions will be working where there is no patient contact.

59 Mr. Carroll: Are there any new variants on the horizon? Not right now.

60 Ms. Conner: Is it OK to get the booster and the flu shot at the same time? Yes.

61 Ms. Conner: Should you bring your vaccination card when going for the booster? Yes, but we
62 can make another one for you if necessary.

63 Ms. Conner: Is it more important this year for children to get a flu shot? Yes.

64 Mr. Corey: What percent of the 3% that tested positive were vaccinated or unvaccinated? The
65 vaccinated that tested positive is higher than it used to be and the unvaccinated that tested
66 positive is 4 times higher.

67 *Public questions and comments answered by Dr. Dobson:*

68 Susan Plaisance: Are we closing in on herd immunity in Vermont? Herd immunity is ~90% and
69 we are closing in on that.

70 **5. PUBLIC COMMENT**

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

- 74 1. Public Comment is to allow residents an opportunity to share information or
75 make announcements that benefit the community at large.
- 76 2. The topic should **not** be related to an agenda item. If a member of the public
77 wants to comment on an agenda item they can do so during the discussion of
78 that item.
- 79 3. Comments should be 3 minutes or less.
- 80 4. You are required to state your real name and town of residence.
- 81 5. Sharing comments, announcements and concerns are encouraged rather than
82 asking questions. Public Comment is not a time for discussion. If you have
83 specific questions it is best to call the Town Manager to get a full explanation
84 and accurate information.
- 85 6. If the topic requires much discussion the item will be considered as an agenda
86 item at a future meeting.

87

88 Wendy Morse from the Department of Labor and Wendy Callard from Creative
89 Workforce Solutions stated that they are having their first Job Fair in 2 years at the State Office
90 Complex on October 20th from 11:00am-2:00pm with October 22nd as a rain date. Sponsors
91 beside the Department of Labor are Creative Workforce Solutions, Vocational Rehabilitation,
92 and the SWVT Chamber of Commerce. There is no better time for a job seeker with 18,000 jobs
93 available statewide. The Department of Labor is open Monday-Thursday with walk-in hours
94 Tuesdays from 9:00am-11:00am and Wednesdays from 1:00pm-3:00pm. The Department of
95 Labor's number is 802-442-6376 or 802-343-4726 for employers.

96 **6. DISCUSSION ON DOWNTOWN FUNDING STRUCTURE**

97 *Gary Corey owns property downtown and recused himself from this agenda item.*

98 Ms. Jenkins noted the Downtown Walk-Abouts that she has done recently with
99 Congressman Peter Welch, Lt. Governor Molly Gray, and White and Burke. The excitement

100 they expressed about the changes and vibrancy they were seeing "was good to hear" as was
101 her experience volunteering at the downtown Welcome Center hearing the many different
102 reasons why people are frequenting Bennington. Kudos to all who have worked to make the
103 Downtown a destination point as was discussed 10 years ago. "What is good for the Downtown
104 is good for the entire community."

105 Better Bennington Corporation (BBC) President, Susan Plaisance, and Interim Executive
106 Director, Michael McDonough, did the following presentation:

- 107 ➤ The Mission of the BBC is "To lead and support the public in private efforts that
108 promotes and enhances our Downtown as a vital, commercial, and cultural heart of our
109 community".
- 110 ➤ The center of our Town is Putnam Square.
- 111 ➤ The landscape of the Downtown has changed and there is a new vitality that is feeding
112 the entire community.
- 113 ➤ There are more people living downtown, accessing services and shopping which attracts
114 new businesses and promotes and sustains population growth.
- 115 ➤ There is a critical relationship between the Downtown core and everyone in the
116 community.
- 117 ➤ We are requesting that the Board look at whether or not Downtown businesses should
118 continue to pay the 2nd tax or if that burden should be consumed by everyone within
119 the General Fund tax of the Town.

120 Mr. Hurd explained that the 2nd tax, or the Downtown Improvement District (DID) tax, is
121 created by Charter that assesses a tax on the commercial properties, and not the residential
122 properties, in the Downtown. We have the Grand List of the properties and the budget that is
123 presented by the BBC. The current approved amount is \$82,000 and the current tax rate is
124 ~\$.20/\$100 of value that is calculated in a similar way as are the other town taxes.

125 *Board questions and comments answered by Ms. Plaisance and Mr. McDonough:*

126 Mr. Carroll: What would be that tax structure for all of the property owners if the change is
127 approved? Mr. Hurd answered that it would be \$8.00/\$100,000 of value. The BBC would
128 present to the Board at budget time as do the other agencies that are line items within the
129 town budget. And, it would free up dollars for the Downtown businesses to then put back into
130 their businesses.

131 Mr. Hurd: If this comes to fruition, would the BBC then spread out beyond the Downtown
132 District? We would help decorate, for example, the rest of the town as much as we could with
133 current staff. We currently serve the Downtown beyond the Downtown District and it would
134 be an expectation that even more of the town could be part of that. This could be discussed at
135 the town budget meetings.

136 Ms. Conner: Do you feel this would be beneficial in drawing new businesses? Yes.

Ms. Conner: Have you researched how other communities fund their downtowns? Some are supported by general tax funds, some rely on their own resources, and some are a combination of the two. The ones with town support have "a tremendous advantage", and we have the benefit of the BBC being a separate entity from the town.

Ms. Conner: The information that you have provided is appreciated.

Mr. Lee-Clark: Are you able to do anything beyond the Downtown Improvement District as it exists today? Our responsibilities are contractually for the Downtown Improvement District, so no.

Mr. Lee-Clark: To change the taxing source would allow you to think beyond the DID? Yes.

Ms. Perrin: Thank you for bringing this to the Board.

Public questions and comments:

Nancy White: The Town supports the Downtown by fixing the streets and sidewalks and the money that the State has put into downtowns should be ample. Decisions are now made without public input first instead of how decisions used to be made 10 years ago. A discussion of the 2012 priorities will be put on a future agenda.

7. COMMUNITY POLICING UPDATE

A. TASK FORCE UPDATE

Ms. Conner reported the following:

- The Task Force had their first meeting on October 7th at around 7:30pm on Zoom and are "off and running" researching and forming sub-committees.
- The meeting was recorded by CAT-TV and is available for viewing.
- Their next meeting is October 21st from 4:30pm-6:30pm on Zoom.
- Zoom is going to work for the first two meetings but they will be in person after that.
- The Select Board is taking a "back seat" and not micromanaging the Task Force. They will determine what they share with the public.
- The Open Meeting Law does apply to the Task Force.

B. PROCEDURES POSTING

Mr. Lee-Clark reported the following:

- The Bennington Police Department (BPD) has drafted the procedures for the first set of policies approved by the Board and they will be posted on the BPD website.
- The Working Group will be meeting soon to see that the second set of procedures are also ready to post.

8. STOCKLEE LANE SOLAR SITE

Mr. Monks reported the following:

- ❖ The Allco Renewable Energy Limited and the Melone's have reached a settlement with the Apple Hill Subdivision.
- ❖ Allco has acquired the preferred site on Stocklee Lane and have filed a petition with the Vermont Public Utility Commission (PUC) to approve the relocation of the Chelsea and Apple Hill Solar projects to there.
- ❖ Allco is requesting that the Select Board support this petition which, would be expected, because the Select Board has already accepted Stocklee Lane as a preferred site.
- ❖ However, the Select Board has no say in the acceptance, or not, of the pricing.
- ❖ The Apple Hill Association has submitted a letter of support for the project.
- ❖ The perimeter will still need to be screened and they will still need to abide by all of the other site criteria requirements.
- ❖ The PUC has exclusive authority over renewable energy generation.
- ❖ This may, or may not, take a long time to come to fruition.

Bruce Lee-Clark moved and Sarah Perrin seconded for the Town to send a Letter of Support for the Allco Renewable Energy Limited Petitions 21-3191 and 21-3192 as requested subject to final review of the project based on our Town Plan. The motion carried unanimously.

9. MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Hurd reported the following:

- ✓ SVC Fields Use and Recommendation - Staff are recommending a continuation of the maintenance and use agreement currently in place. We currently maintain the baseball field, soccer field, and their adjacent parking areas.

Sarah Perrin moved and Bruce Lee-Clark seconded to continue the Maintenance and Use Agreement that we currently have with the SVHC for up to two (2) years. The motion carried unanimously.

- ✓ Citizen Survey - Will be launched on October 12, 2021 and available online at www.benningtonvt.org/survey, by mail upon request to 442-1037, or in person at Town Offices, the Community Center (Rec Center), and the Senior Center on Pleasant Street. The survey will close on November 3, 2021.
- ✓ Mandatory Vaccination/Testing for All Town Employees - Effective November 1, 2021, all Town employees must be vaccinated or submit to weekly testing. This will allow some to begin the vaccination regime before the deadline. Both the Public Works and Police Union agreed with the mandate.
- ✓ Coffee with the Seniors - Spent an hour at the Center on Wednesday talking with 20-25 seniors. Many of the questions and comments focused on senior safety on the streets including bike riders on sidewalks, skateboarders on sidewalks, panhandlers, and loud mufflers. Many are concerned about the possible move to the Benn High building, we need

to do a better job of voting notification, and many are interested in getting more information, more often.

- ✓ Additional Comments - On October 12th we will begin 3 weeks of hydrant flushing. After flushing, use the cold water only until it clears. The purpose of the flushing is to get dirt and sediment out of the system, as well as being mandated by the State.

10. UPCOMING AGENDA

October 25, 2021 - 2nd Discussion on the Downtown Funding

October 25, 2021 - Rotary Discussion

October 25 or November 8, 2021 - BCRC Community Priorities Update

11. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Lee-Clark: Thank you to the Town employees who have been working on Washington Avenue and elsewhere putting in 1,800 feet of sidewalk.

Mr. Lee-Clark: Between today and October 29th the Bennington Police Department will be participating in Socktober to bring new socks to the homeless. Bring your new socks to the Police Department and they will bring them to the Coalition for the Homeless for distribution.

Ms. Conner: Thank you to whoever put the Easy Slow Cooker Potato Soup recipe in the Town's Newsletter.

Mr. Corey: The MAU Board has an informational meeting on the Spinelli Complex on October 25th at 6:00pm at the Central Office and on Zoom.

Ms. Jenkins: PAVE is organizing Warm the Children this year so contact them if you would like to contribute financially and/or with your time.

10. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. PERSONNEL

At 7:45pm, Sarah Perrin moved and Bruce Lee-Clark seconded that the meeting was adjourned finding that an Executive Session be held on Personnel as premature public knowledge would place a person involved in the subject matter at a substantial disadvantage. There will be no actions taken on these items when going back into Open Session. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy H. Lively

Secretary

**SELECT BOARD
MINUTES**

October 19 2021
Special Meeting

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

The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 5:30 pm. Mike Munson, Library Board Chair provided an overview of the Library and its functions. The Library Board members then led the Select Board members on a tour of the facility.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 6:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stuart A. Hurd', written over a horizontal line.

Stuart A. Hurd



TOWN OF BENNINGTON

Town of Bennington Declaration of Inclusion

The Town of Bennington condemns racism and welcomes all persons, regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity or expression, age, or disability, and wants everyone to feel safe and welcome in our community.

As a town, we formally condemn discrimination in all of its forms, commit to fair and equal treatment of everyone in our community and will strive to ensure all our actions, policies and operating procedures reflect this commitment.

The Town of Bennington has and will continue to be a place where individuals can live freely and express their opinions.

Dated at Bennington, Vermont this 25th day of October 2021.
Select Board, Town of Bennington, Vermont

Jeannie Jenkins, Chair

Jeanne Conner, Vice Chair

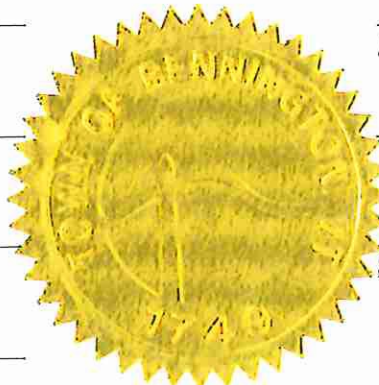
James Carroll

Tom Haley

Gary Corey

Sarah Perrin

Bruce C. Lee-Clark



MANAGER'S REPORT

October 25, 2021

ACTION

FY 2023 Budget Schedule Attached please find the proposed budget schedule. You will note the Board's first work session is January 3, a Monday evening. I didn't think you'd want to meet on Saturday January 1, 2022.

Action requested By consensus accept this schedule.

Vicious Dog Complaint and Hearing Date We have a formal complaint and request for hearing. The earliest date available to hold said hearing is November 1, 2021. I am suggesting we meet at 5 pm at the Fire Facility public space to hear this complaint. If you all agree and a quorum is available, I will set the meeting room up.

Action requested Agree to set the hearing date as recommended.

INFORMATIONAL

Economic Development Strategy Update We await the report and recommendations of White and Burke, the firm contracted to analyze the projects provided by Town departments, BCRC staff, BBC staff, and the Select Board's Economic Development and Infrastructure sub-committee. Available funding sources may be the \$3.9 million ARPA funds, the TIF and other grants. Once this work is completed, public input will be sought.

Stormwater Permits and Homeowners Associations Three existing stormwater permits now facing renewal require some changes due to regulatory action. We have been maintaining the stormwater in municipal rights of way. However, private residences with paved driveways and other spaces generate stormwater that must be managed under the law. We can comply by controlling what residents do on their properties (not an ideal situation) or we can, with the State's assistance, seek to have these developments form Homeowners Associations and through that authority manage their own stormwater. I've attached a letter of explanation. We should place on a future agenda to discuss.

Public Works projects Paving should be completed this week weather permitting. PFOA related water line extensions are essentially finished as is the south end water system improvements to increase pressure in higher elevations. Lead line removal efforts will continue for a time in those neighborhoods where lead service lines have been identified and remain.

FOLLOW-UP

The Bennington Police Department and the Communications Coordinator's Reports are attached.

The Bike/Ped Monthly Report is attached.

Memo

To: Bennington Select Board, Department Heads & Agencies
From: Stuart A. Hurd, Town Manager
Date: October 12, 2021
Subject: FY '23 Budget Preparation Schedule and
2022 Town Meeting Schedule

The following schedule and guidelines are provided for your use and information:

Department Budgets due to Manager:	Wednesday, November 17, 2021
Agency Funding Applications due for:	
B.C.R.C.	Monday, December 6, 2021
Bennington Free Library	Monday, December 6, 2021
John G. McCullough Free Library, Inc.	Monday, December 6, 2021
North Bennington Recreation	Monday, December 6, 2021
Paran Recreations	Monday, December 6, 2021
Bennington Rescue Squad	Monday, December 6, 2021
All Agencies on the ballot	Monday, December 6, 2021
Manager's Budget to Select Board	Monday, December 20, 2021
Agency Petitions due:	January 13, 2022
Select Board Budget sessions:	Monday, January 3, 2022
	Saturday, January 8, 2022
	Saturday, January 15, 2022
Sign Warning	January 24, 2022
Warning posted no later than:	January 30, 2022
March Town Meeting:	
Floor Meeting:	February 28, 2022
Vote	March 1, 2022

Cc: Managers w/staff meeting 10/12/21
M:\Manager\Michele\MyFiles\Budget\FY'23\budgetschedulefy23.doc



BENNINGTON & MONTPELIER, VERMONT
PO Box 139 | 150 Depot Street | Bennington, VT 05201 | mskeng.com | (802) 447-1402
Engineering • Survey • Permitting • Construction Administration

October 11, 2021

Stuart A. Hurd
Town Manager
205 South Street
Bennington, VT 05260

Re: Review of Town stormwater permits

Dear Mr. Hurd,

MSK Engineers has reviewed the existing 9010 stormwater permits for the following subdivisions.

Country Terrace Subdivision	#4135-9010.R
Barney Road Subdivision	#3629-9010.R
Holt Springs Subdivision	#6277-9010.R

The Country Terrace Subdivision permit covers Bradley Drive, Justin Avenue, and Laura Lane; The Barney Road permit covers Garbrooke Drive and Able Drive; and the Holt Springs permit covers West Street, Center Street, and East Street.

These permits quantify the impervious area within each development and specify what stormwater infrastructure is used to treat runoff. Each permit requires yearly inspections and for stormwater infrastructure to be maintained. For each of these developments, the permits cover runoff from surfaces both within public rights-of-way and on private parcels.

Because the State of Vermont has superseded the 9010 stormwater permit with the 9050 stormwater permit, all three subdivisions must have their 9010 permits renewed as 9050 permits when the current permits expire. The Country Terrace Subdivision permit expired on 01/03/2021 and was subsequently granted a 120 day application deadline extension, with a new application deadline of October 29th, 2021. The Barney Road Subdivision permit expires on 02/14/2023, and the Holt Springs permit expires on 01/27/2021.

MSK's records review of these permits indicates that each development was originally permitted by its developer. After each site was developed, the Town of Bennington assumed ownership of roads and right-of-ways and began acting as permittee for each site's stormwater permit.

Thus far the Town has acted in good faith by maintaining stormwater infrastructure within the right of way, however, as these permits cover private parcels as well, if the Town wishes to continue acting as permittee it must attain the authority to keep both public and private lands in compliance for each subdivision. This entails ensuring no new impervious surfaces are constructed within these developments on private land and maintaining any stormwater infrastructure on private land.

Alternatively, the Town can request (with the assistance from the state of Vermont) the residents of each development form a homeowner's association to act as co-applicant on these permits. In this case, the homeowner's association would ensure permit compliance on private parcels, and the Town of Bennington would continue to ensure permit compliance within right of ways. If this option is selected, the Town would apply for a Municipal Roads General Permit, permitting access roads and associated stormwater conveyance systems within the town right of way.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me with any questions.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nick Ratzer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Nick" and last name "Ratzer" clearly distinguishable.

Nicholas Ratzer, Staff Engineer
MSK Engineers
505-503-3858
nratzer@mskeng.com

Town Manager Report to the Select Board October 2021

Chief Paul Doucette and Lt. Camillo Grande were accepted and will be attending the FBI-LEEDA Executive Leadership 5-day training program in November. Upon successful completion of this course, the Town of Bennington will be reimbursed by the Vermont League of Cities and Towns for costs associated with the training program.

The new statewide use of force policy took effect on October 1, 2021. The Use of Force Policy has been updated at the Bennington Police Department and placed on our website. We have been meeting with community partners in reference to this new policy and will be working together in an effort to better understand needs of other agencies and a combined response.

Members of the Bennington Police Department participated in the following community events during the month of October: SOCKTOBER – collection of socks for persons in need. Active shooter training at the Vermont State Employees Credit Union. Cancer awareness – PINK PATCH DISPLAY. Drug Take Bag with the Drug Enforcement Administration.

The Bennington Police Department received an award from Climate Advocates Bennington as a result of the purchase and use of hybrid police vehicles and electric patrol bicycles. The award was presented to Chief Doucette at CAT-TV on October 13, 2021. The police department shares this award with members of the Bennington community that supported our efforts to obtain these vehicles. We are looking forward to changing our fleet to all hybrid vehicles over the next four years.

Chief Doucette and Lt. Grande have been working with Jennifer Holley at Websites and More enhancing and adding information to our existing website. We have also been working with Jonah Spivak, Communications Director, with promoting the police department.

The Bennington Police Department continues working with United Counseling Service in order to bring Mental Health First Aid training to law enforcement officers in the area. Three members of the Bennington Police Department have been identified as potential instructors. Once trained, the members will present mental health first aid training programs to law enforcement officers in the area.

Lt. Grande and Chief Doucette instructed CJ101 to members of the Safety and Equity Task Force. The presentation was well received and we are looking forward to working with members of the task force in the future.

The new recruits completed Level 1 training and have been working with Field Training Officers at the Bennington Police Department. All four recruits passed the physical agility testing at the Vermont Police Academy and have headed off to the 19-week Level III training program. We anticipate successful completion of training by the end of February 2022.

Corbin Dean accepted a position as a dispatcher at the Bennington Police Department and began training this month. He will be participating in training on all three shifts. Upon successful completion of training, he will be assigned a permanent shift. Corbin is a graduate of Southern Vermont College and makes his home in Bennington.



Town of Bennington

Communications Coordinator Report — October 25, 2021

On September 20, 2021, the new role of Communications Coordinator was launched as a manager level position in Town Government.

Much of the first month has been taken up with meeting with each of the department heads in the town and becoming familiar with where information is stored and how it is all handled.

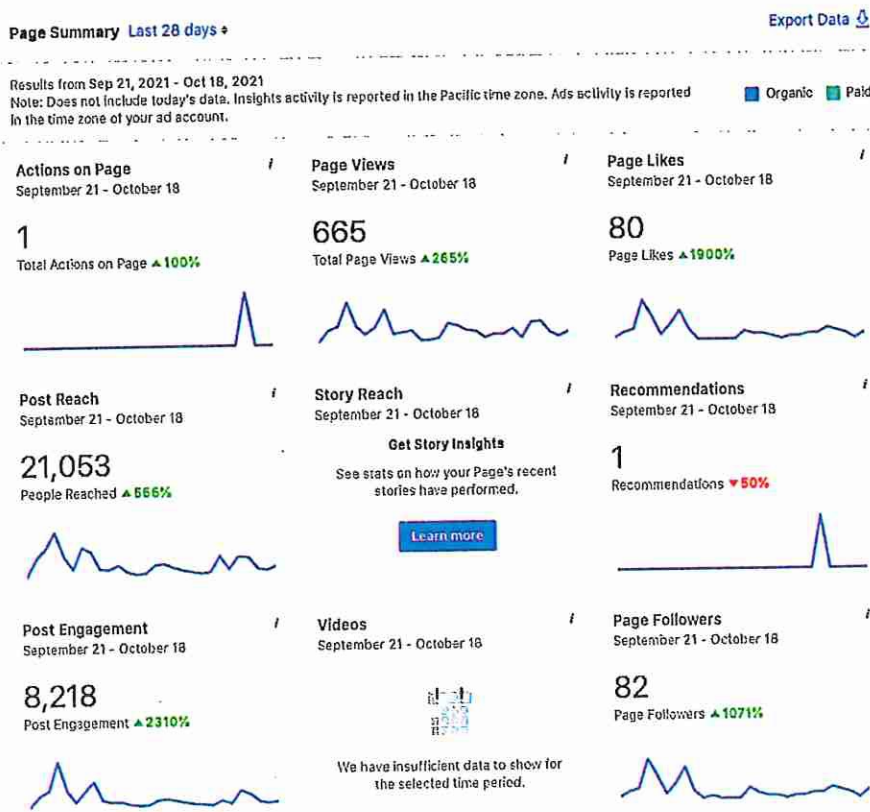
Citizen Outreach:

I've met with, emailed, or spoken with 21 citizens on a wide variety of concerns or questions. I feel strongly that my role requires me to be present in the community as much as possible and my goal is to have at least one citizen interaction per day. When the interaction includes complaints I work to address those immediately whenever possible.

Business Outreach:

I've stopped by or emailed with the following businesses to hear their concerns or ideas: Gift Garden, Fiddleheads, Bennington Armory, Garage Distillery, Bennington Bookshop, Bennington Museum, Spice and Nice, and Bringing You VT. When possible, I follow up immediately (ie: new bike racks for Bennington Bookshop), and I'm recording more long term concerns to share with the appropriate departments.

Social Media / Facebook Report - First Month



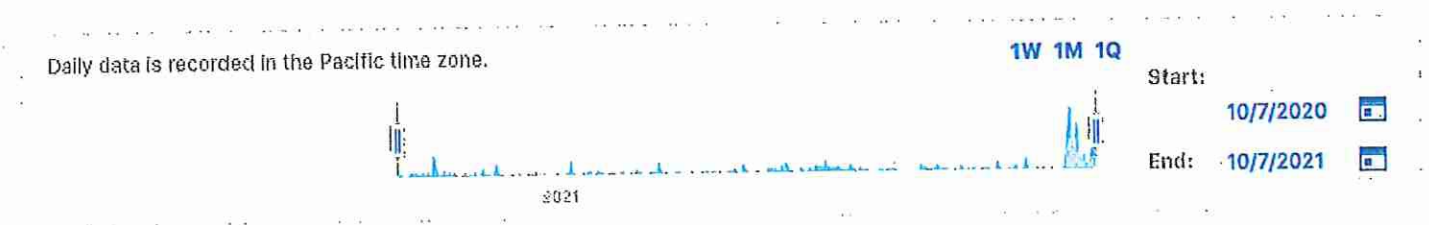
Non-Profits and Community Groups:

These organizations often our partners in engaging with the community and I've made an effort to connect with a number of them early on and will continue to do so. Those include the SVSU, BCRC, CAT TV, and the Bennington County Coalition for the Homeless.

Facebook and Social Media:

Outreach via Facebook is currently our only significant social media platform. I plan to add Instagram in the future to increase engagement with different target audiences that are not using Facebook as much. I've expanded our postings to include more items of general interest to increase overall engagement and so far the results have been very good which indicates a strong interest in this type of information from the community.

Facebook Reach - One Year Comparison



Town Departments, Boards, Commissions, and Task Forces:

The Town has ten departments, plus the Senior Center and Bennington Community Center (Rec Center). I have met with each of those departments and have begun work coordinating with those departments as appropriate.

The Police Department is one that I expect will be a growing part of my work which also includes working with the Safety and Equity Task Force and associated efforts to share with the public progress and developments.

I've also worked with updates for the Historic Preservation Commission, the Energy Committee, the Town Clerks Office, and Collections.

Website Updates:

A major revamp of the town website is needed. The town has over 120 pages of information and over 1,300 posts of content. I've started doing research on other town websites and will be looking at our traffic logs to determine ways to improve navigation as part of preparing for an RFP to implement the update. My plan is complete this work and have a RFP ready to put out by the end of November.

Cyber Security / IT:

I've joined the town team that is charged with reviewing cybersecurity and IT security. While I am not an expert in this regard, I am hopeful that my background experience in this area will be useful to the team and provide another set of eyes to help navigate this very complicated and ever changing landscape.

Current and Recent Projects:

One of the first projects to hit my desk was organizing an award ceremony for Climate Advocates Bennington (CAB) to present an Environmental Achievement Award to the Bennington Police Department. The ceremony involved coordinated with CAT TV, the Energy Committee, the BPD and Select Board members. A Bennington Banner photographer was in attendance as well. The result was a videotaped ceremony that is on CAT TV, You Tube, and has been shared on Facebook.

I'm currently working on a ribbon cutting event to celebrate the completion of the Orchard Village – Willowbrook Pathway. This upcoming event will be open to the public and will also be recorded. We will have an official date for this event by the time of this next Select Board meeting.

250th Planning:

Bennington has long been a leader in celebrating our local history and the 250th Anniversary of the Founding of Vermont and the Battle of Bennington is coming in 2027. We have continuously celebrated the Battle since 1778 and several of those celebrations were of historic proportions in and of themselves — with the creation of the Bennington Battle Monument our greatest reminder of what is possible. What "big thing" will we do as our mark on posterity?

To that end I am active on the newly created Vermont 250th Anniversary Commission, and am the only commissioner representing Southern Vermont. I also serve on the Vermont 250th Education Sub-committee and I am happy to report that we are just

now beginning a collaboration with the SVSU that will help inform our work at the state level. I am also part of the Vermont delegation to the Federal America 250th commission.

I am also working on the creation of a local committee to interface with the State and Federal commissions to focus specifically on Commemoration efforts for Bennington. I will report on this further in November.

Citizen Survey:

Another initial project has been the creation of a citizen survey, based on surveys that have been done in 2016 and 2018. The survey launched on October 12 and will be running through the week of November 2. Currently we have 322 responses and a 73% completion rate. Average time to fill out the survey is 15 minutes. The survey is promoted on social media, stories in the paper, and we have purchased ads in the Bennington Banner.

Future Proactive Outreach:

I'm interested in creating an advisory team of local business leaders, do outreach to fraternal orders and social clubs, and create paths for citizen involvement and listening.;

Outreach by the numbers:

Looking at my calendar and email for the last month, here are some stats for you...

Number of FB Posts - 25
Number of emails sent - 550+
Number of meetings attended - 47
Looking Ahead:

Respectfully Submitted,
—Jonah Spivak

Town of Bennington Bike/Ped Projects Update October 2021

Orchard Village (formerly Applegate) to Willowbrook Path

Project Description: Pathway to connect Orchard Village, Willowbrook Apartments, and Molly Stark Elementary School.

Status: Construction of the pathway is complete. A ribbon cutting ceremony will occur in November.

Ninja Trail

Project Description: The proposed path is 2.12 miles. It begins on Hicks Avenue at the existing pedestrian bridge and ends at the intersection of VT Route 67A/College Drive/Silk Road/Matteson Road. From there, pedestrians and cyclists can reach the Village of North Bennington via Bennington College's paths and low-speed roads. The path varies between wooded areas, open fields, and roadside facilities. It crosses streams, goes under an overpass, and crosses a highway.

Status: \$1 Million in State/Federal Grants have been secured. An update of the cost estimate using current pricing indicates that significant additional funding will need to be secured to complete the entire project, but it is hoped that by splitting the project into phases construction may commence before all of the funding is secured. Additional grant opportunities are being explored. Segments of paved path between Hicks Avenue and Harmon Road (behind Walmart) and between Bennington College entrance and the Hampton Inn have been constructed. An interim path (dirt and gravel) between the two completed segments had been open for use, but the temporary bridge over the Furnace Brook has been closed due to rotting supports. The Dept. of Buildings and Grounds is considering options for repairs to the temporary bridge as we await construction of the permanent bridge. Preliminary plans for the construction of the remainder of the paved path have been approved by the State. The Town has now obtained all of the easements required for the project. Construction of the first phase of the project is scheduled for 2022 subject to State permits being issued in a timely fashion.

Bennington Pathway – Rail/Trail

Project Description: Shared use path (bike path) along Railroad Right-of-Way from Bennington Station to Emma Street (off of Northside Drive). The portion of the path from Bennington Station

to Orchard Road will be paved. The remainder of the path will be gravel.

Status: State/Federal Grant for 90% of cost has been secured. A local match of \$100,000 is being held in a reserve account. An additional \$80,000 match is necessary and will impact the FY 22 budget. The Town has contracted with Markowski Excavating to construct the project. Clearing of vegetation has been completed and removal of the rails and excavation of stumps has begun. Construction will likely conclude in September of 2022.

Benmont Avenue Bike/Ped Improvements

Project Description: Improvements to make Benmont Avenue safer and more attractive for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers, including significant changes to the Hunt Street intersection. The improvements will act as an extension of the Ninja Trail into Downtown Bennington.

Status: A total of \$559,000 in State/Federal Grants have been awarded. The Town match will be approximately \$140,000. All easements have been obtained. Additional funds may need to be sought. The Town DPW will likely construct the planned improvements to the Hunt Street intersection to keep costs down. Grant funds will be used to construct the remainder of the project. Final plans are complete and will be submitted to the State for review and approval next month. Project scheduled to be put out to bid in Spring of 22. Construction is scheduled for 2022-23.