

BENNINGTON

2023 Annual Report



Snowstorm January 21, 2023

Photo provided by
Stuart Hurd

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VISION STATEMENT FOR THE TOWN OF BENNINGTON

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

Adopted by the Bennington Select Board August 24, 2020

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.

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Select Board

Jeannie Jenkins, Select Board Chair

It has been an exciting year for Bennington. Projects contemplated for years are finally coming to fruition through the hard work of Town staff and the community. Housing, economic development, and recreation have topped the list of priorities for the Town over the past decade and the Select Board is pleased to have had a role in helping our community move forward. Change is simultaneously exciting and bittersweet, and we are certainly experiencing this throughout the town.

Recreational opportunities are blossoming throughout the community with improvements to both the beautiful Walloomsac Riverwalk and the Rail Trail that connects downtown and Northside Drive. Walkers, joggers, and bicyclists can be seen enjoying these vital corridors in the community. New town signs alerting the community to the many trails and outdoor recreation areas have been a welcome addition. The new Bike Hub and the continued efforts of the Appalachian Trail community have added vitality and focus to these efforts.

The Berkshire Family YMCA continues to serve our community well through significantly expanded opportunities to all with particular focus on youth and seniors. The number of children attending summer camps has increased four-fold since the town entered into the first management agreement in 2019. Senior programming has outgrown our current facilities, and we are eagerly awaiting the beginning of renovations to the Benn High facility for expanded recreation space, larger facilities for the Senior Center and Meals on Wheels, a childcare center, and much needed housing.

The downtown saw a number of changes this year. We said goodbye to M&T Bank's prominent presence on Four Corners, Bringing You Vermont closed their much-loved business at year's end, and local favorite, Farm Road Brewing, closed due to the untimely death of its owner. We said goodbye and then a joyful welcome back to the W. Collective as they reopened at a new location, and we celebrated the reimagining of the Bennington Theatre on Main Street. Several new businesses opened in the designated downtown including Abuela's Plant Boutique, Union Underground South, the Bennington Community Market, and the Gift Garden's Holiday Cottage.

A transformation on Northside Drive is currently underway. While we lost some iconic businesses including the Bowling Lanes and Dairy Bar, a number of regional and national chain stores are either in process or open for business in this part of town. These include Burger King, Silver Therapeutics, Hoffman Carwash, Starbucks, Chipotle, Marshall's, and Harbor Freight. The desire of these large chains to invest in Bennington confirms that our investments in infrastructure and economic development are bearing fruit.

The west end of town also saw the reopening and revitalization of what is now known as the Monument Arts and Cultural Center. In a few short months, the Center has already hosted dozens of musical and theater performances highlighting international and local talent.

Town staff continue to provide exceptional service. We have seen a number of significant street, sewer, and water line projects including this year's improvements to County Street, year-round maintenance of 40 miles of sidewalks, and the upkeep of our many Town parks

and playing fields. Our Police Department's initiatives this year require special note. They have added an in-house victim's advocate, two community resource specialists, and a part-time crisis clinician – all while managing one of the highest call volumes in the state, collaborating with the Community Policing Advisory Review Board, and bringing new officers into the department.

The devastation wrought by the opioid crisis in our county and the State's announcement of the end of the pandemic era Motel Voucher program for unhoused families and individuals prompted rapid action and coalition-building in our community. Our community prides itself on our strong social service network and our care for those in need and this was no exception. Project Alliance was formed and quickly a plan to provide expanded services was formulated with United Counseling Services and Turning Point taking lead roles. While many issues remain to be dealt with, this level of collaboration is a hallmark of the Bennington community.

According to Vermont Business Magazine, Vermont continues its strong trend of having more people move into the state than leave. In addition, as one of four resettlement communities in Vermont, Bennington has welcomed more than 80 refugees as new residents. In December, Bennington opened its first Multicultural Center to provide support for new Americans. While we note that an increase in population heightens our housing challenges, it also brings an expanded workforce. We welcome and benefit from the energy and ideas that new residents bring to Bennington.

It is timely that the Bennington Planning Commission has embarked on a new update of the Town Plan. Building on the Town's Vision, the Commission has launched an ambitious plan to broaden participation in discussions about Bennington's future. This initiative spans 2023 to 2024 and provides a wonderful bridge from our past year to our next.

There is so much that is new and inspiring to celebrate. Thank you to everyone who worked and believed in Bennington in this past year.

Notes:

Boards and Commissions

The following list of the Town of Bennington Boards and Commissions includes a brief description of the duties of each office and those positions that will become available March through June 2024.

SELECT BOARD MEMBERS - An elected position with a salary currently set at \$1,400. per year with terms of three years. Meetings are held on the second and fourth Mondays of each month plus the Annual Town meeting each year, and any special meetings which may be required. Select Board Members are empowered by statute and charter to determine policy, finances, ordinances, and general direction of Town business, appoint the Town Manager and members of Boards and Commissions.

(elected 3-year term)

| | |
|-------------------|--------|
| Jim Carroll | 3/2024 |
| Gary Corey | 3/2024 |
| Jeanne Connor | 3/2025 |
| Tom Haley | 3/2025 |
| Jeannette Jenkins | 3/2025 |
| Sarah Perrin | 3/2026 |
| Edward Woods | 3/2026 |

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD - The Development Review Board hears and decides upon permit applications regarding development in the Town of Bennington including, Variance Requests, Conditional Use Requests, Site Plans, Design Plans, Planned Unit Developments, Planned Residential Developments, Subdivisions, and Appeals of the Zoning Administrator's decisions. Board members will be expected to attend at least one training session annually to develop and maintain the skills and knowledge necessary to perform their powers and duties on the Board.

(appointed to 3-year term)

| | |
|-------------------------|--------|
| Catherine Bryars | 6/2024 |
| Ron Hachey | 6/2024 |
| Daniel Malmborg | 6/2025 |
| Jane Griswold Radocchia | 6/2025 |
| Ron Alderman | 6/2026 |
| William Barney | 6/2026 |
| Charles N. Kokoras | 6/2026 |

FOREST FIRE WARDEN - An appointed position by the State of Vermont with Town Approval with a term of 5 years.

(appointed to 5-year term)

VERMONT TOWN FOREST FIRE WARDEN – Henry Higgins 06/30/24

VERMONT DEPUTY TOWN FOREST FIRE WARDEN – Matthew G. Hathaway 06/30/24

VERMONT DEPUTY TOWN FOREST FIRE WARDEN – Position Vacant 06/30/24

HEALTH OFFICER - An appointed position by the State of Vermont with Town Approval with a term of 3 years.

(appointed to 3-year term)

| | |
|--|------------|
| HEALTH OFFICER – Bridget Gallant | 02/28/2025 |
| DEPUTY HEALTH OFFICER – Paul Dansereau | 02/28/2025 |

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION - An appointed position with a term of three years and requires expertise or qualifications in the fields of architecture, historic preservation, etc. Meetings are held twice per month. The Historic Preservation Commission is empowered by ordinance to act in the preservation and identification of Bennington's historic sites and structures; oversee the survey and review of historic sites eligible for the National Register, educate and advise other boards and commissions as well as the general public with regard to historic preservation matters.

(appointed to 3-year term)

| | |
|----------------------|--------|
| Anne G. Bugbee | 6/2024 |
| Thomas Scheetz | 6/2024 |
| Michael P. McDonough | 6/2024 |
| Robert Tegard | 6/2024 |
| Thomas Blakely | 6/2026 |
| Jeffrey Goldstone | 6/2026 |
| Joseph H. Hall | 6/2026 |

HOUSING AUTHORITY - An autonomous body appointed for terms of five years by the Select Board which acts as the Board of Directors for Housing Authority properties (Willowbrook, Brookside Apartments, Beech Court, and Walloomsac Apartments) and oversees the staff and sets policies for operation.

(appointed to 5-year term)

| | |
|-------------------|--------|
| Sandra Bessette | 3/2024 |
| Paul Walden | 3/2025 |
| Rosemary Morrison | 3/2026 |
| Sharyn L. Brush | 3/2027 |
| Nancy V. Messina | 3/2028 |

JUSTICES OF THE PEACE

(elected 2-year term)

| | |
|--------------------|-----------|
| Gerald Albert | 1/31/2025 |
| Barbara Bluto | 1/31/2025 |
| Bruce Lee-Clark | 1/31/2025 |
| William Greer | 1/31/2025 |
| Thomas Haley | 1/31/2025 |
| Michele Hogan | 1/31/2025 |
| Jacqueline Kelly | 1/31/2025 |
| Albert Krawczyk | 1/31/2025 |
| Vickie Lampron | 1/31/2025 |
| Brian Maroney, Jr. | 1/31/2025 |
| James Marsden | 1/31/2025 |
| Anne Mook | 1/31/2025 |
| Mary A. Morrissey | 1/31/2025 |
| Joan Pinsonneault | 1/31/2025 |
| David B. Shaffe | 1/31/2025 |

BOARD OF LISTERS - An appointed position with a term of two years. Meetings are held once or twice per month or as needed. The Listers inspect properties, approve assessments developed by the Assessor's Office and hear and act upon appeals by property owners.

(appointed to 2-year term)

| | |
|---------------|--------|
| Peter Greene | 6/2024 |
| Carol L. Holm | 6/2024 |

TOWN MODERATOR

(elected to 3-year term)

| | |
|--------------------|--------|
| Jason P. Morrissey | 3/2025 |
|--------------------|--------|

PLANNING COMMISSION - An appointed position with a term of four years. Meetings will be established when the Commission meets. This is a five-member board. The Planning Commission drafts, revises, updates, and upholds the provisions of the Town Plan; makes recommendations to the Select Board regarding amendments to the Zoning Bylaw, sign ordinance, and subdivision regulations; actively participates in the preservation of historic sites and agricultural lands; and is charged with the overall planning of Bennington.

(appointed to 4-year term)

| | |
|----------------------|--------|
| Bruce Lierman | 6/2025 |
| Michael P. McDonough | 6/2025 |
| Nicholas T. Lasoff | 6/2026 |
| Evan Yadeski | 6/2026 |
| Bridget Elder | 6/2027 |
| Kenneth Swierad | 6/2027 |
| Curan VanDerWielen | 6/2027 |

REGIONAL COMMISSION - An appointed position with a term of two years. The Regional Commission, part of a county-wide planning commission charged with development of the overall regional planning policies, is empowered to develop budgets, employ staff and assist in development of a regional plan.

(appointed to 2-year term)

| | |
|-----------------|--------|
| Daniel Monks | 6/2024 |
| Donald Campbell | 6/2025 |

ENERGY COMMITTEE - A committee established by the Select Board to pursue implementation of the Town's Energy Plan, advocate for energy conservation and renewable energy projects, and report on a regular basis to the Select Board. The committee shall be comprised of seven (7) members.

(appointed to 2-year term)

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--------|
| Jeannie Jenkins, Select Board Member | |
| Bill Christian | 6/2024 |
| Bill Karis | 6/2024 |
| Bruce Lierman | 6/2024 |
| Chris Bates | 6/2025 |
| Bruce Lee-Clark | 6/2025 |
| Allison Levie | 6/2025 |

COMMUNITY POLICING ADVISORY REVIEW BOARD (CPARB) – This is an appointed body to work in partnership with the Select Board and the Bennington Police Department to provide meaningful community involvement in safety, equity and law enforcement decision-making. It shall be governed by the Select Board Resolution regarding its formation and the same general requirements as other Town Boards and Commissions.

(appointed 3 year term)

Tom Haley, Select Board Member

Will Greer 6/2024

Jeff Vickers 6/2024

Kelly Carroll 6/2025

Scott Richmond 6/2025

Lindsay Brillon 6/2026

Kathleen A. Kost 6/2026

Vickie Lampron 6/2026

Notes:

Manager's Message

Stuart A. Hurd, Town Manager

We, in Bennington's government, work hard to provide the services our residents deem necessary, police and fire protection, highway maintenance, recreation opportunities for people of all ages, and municipal water and sewer services, where feasible. We also work to improve opportunities for jobs, housing, and viable and sustainable economic development through responsible land use planning principles.

As I have done in the past, I would now like to outline the proposed FY2025 fiscal year budget, to be voted on March 5, 2024. The Town budget presented to the voters this year is proposed to increase 5.64 %. These calculations include the Bennington Free Library, \$530,890.00, the John McCullough Library in North Bennington, \$46,750.00, North Bennington Recreation, \$6,000.00, Lake Paran, \$2,700.00, and the Bennington Rescue Squad, at \$246,610.00. All are included as line items in the budget following reviews of their requests and subsequent approval by the Select Board. The total also includes all agencies on the ballot level-funded for comparison. The projected tax rate increase is calculated at 5.53%. Please remember, these calculations are based on current Grand List numbers and do not include potential grant funds which are not yet available. These grants, if awarded, and any growth in the Grand List will reduce the projected tax increase.

Calculating the individual tax rates based on this budget, including ballot agencies, and known revenue we project a \$0.0633 increase in the General Fund tax rate, a \$0.0214 increase in the Highway Fund tax rate, and a \$0.0045 decrease in the Fire Fund tax rate. Combined the total projected increase in the Town's tax rate is \$0.0802 or 5.53% as noted above. Given recent high inflation rates, we feel we have done our best. We ask you, the voters, for your support.

The Agencies on the ballot are all requesting the same amounts as last year. The total amount requested by the agencies is \$124,850.00.

This year the ballot contains a petitioned question (Article 2) specific to the sale of 124 Pleasant Street, the current Senior Center and Meals on Wheels Program site. The Town's intention is to transfer this building to the current owner of Benn High after the renovations at Benn High are completed to provide an enlarged and enhanced Senior Center and Meals Program. The petitioner's motivation may be to stop the Benn High project by blocking the sale. It will not have that effect. Once Benn High is renovated the Senior Center and the Meals Program will be relocated. Our goal is to improve the offerings for the people of Bennington and the region while increasing the tax base by returning 124 Pleasant Street to the tax rolls. We ask for your support with a yes vote.

I have been very fortunate to work with many talented people, staff, and Board members. We all work hard to find solutions that are in the best interest of the residents of Bennington. Thank you all, and a special thank you to the community for your support and patience throughout the year.

Police

Paul J. Doucette, Chief of Police

Officers from the Bennington Police Department made 964 criminal arrests in 2023. Officers responded to 12,903 calls for service, issued 1,403 Vermont Civil Violation Complaints and 1,326 warnings for observed motor vehicle violations. Officers investigated 215 motor vehicle crashes: 57 crashes involved personal injury, 1 fatal motor vehicle crash and 157 property damage only crashes. This number is significantly lower this year as we changed the way we respond and report minor motor vehicle crashes.

All members of the Bennington Police Department received training on a variety of different topics. We did complete all of the mandatory training requirements imposed by the Vermont Criminal Justice Council. Members achieved a total of 4,652 training hours in 2023.

Our communications staff was very busy in 2023, receiving telephone calls, managing radio communications, and dispatching 20,231 calls for service for the Bennington Police Department, Bennington Fire Department, Bennington Rural Fire Department, Bennington Rescue Squad, North Bennington Fire Department, Pownal Rescue Squad and Pownal Fire Departments. In addition, the communications staff helps responding agencies navigate through their calls for service by coordinating mutual aid responses and other required services. Our communications staff manages arrest warrants, relief from abuse orders, stalking orders and miscellaneous assignments.

Through the commitment of many members of the Bennington Police Department, and our law enforcement partners, Bennington experienced a decrease in violent crimes involving firearms in 2023. Dismantling gang related activity in Bennington, through tireless investigations and enforcement efforts, reduced the number of firearm and drug seizures in 2023 as well. The efforts of police department members are evident in the reduction of violent crimes. There is still much work that needs to be done but we feel Bennington is a safer community as a result of our efforts. Building criminal cases involving narcotics and weapons are lengthy and time-consuming, requiring attention to detail.

In 2023, the Bennington Police Department worked with agencies in the State of Vermont, as well as local agencies, in an effort to identify resources related to homelessness and mental health in our community. We were able to identify and hire two community resource specialists as well as enter into an agreement with the State of Vermont and United Counseling Service for a crisis clinician. We look forward to continuing these programs in the upcoming year.

We worked toward filling police officer vacancies at the Department and were able to hire four recruits in 2023. All four recruits attended the 117th Basic Course for Level III Officers at the Vermont Police Academy. Allison Farney, Joyce-Ann Peckham, Robert Morris and Ryan Tatro began their journey of becoming full-time law enforcement Officers at the Bennington Police Department. Their journey will continue into 2024.

In closing, I want to remind our residents I welcome questions, comments, or suggestions throughout the year. Please visit our website, www.benningtonpolice.com.

Fire

Jim Wright, Fire Chief

The Bennington Fire Department responded to 303 calls for service in 2023. In addition to calls for service, members of the Bennington Fire Department conducted fire safety courses for area youth as well as senior citizens, instructing 125 “students”. We welcome requests for fire safety instruction in area schools and local nursing homes.

Similar to the Police Department’s community policing programs, we are involved in community programs as well. We participated in many events including National Night Out Bennington Battle Day Events and community programs with the SVSU and local schools. Members of the Bennington Fire Department are committed to giving back to the community we serve.

Department of Public Works

R.J. Joly, Public Works Director

Larry Gates, Assistant Public Works Director

Highway

The Highway Department is made up of a crew of (14) Laborers, (2) Working Foremen, a Public Works Director, and an Assistant Public Works Director. The department manages and maintains (128) miles of roads, (13) bridges, (475) catch basins, (40) miles of sidewalk, and hundreds of miles of ditches, culverts, and swales. The Highway Department is also responsible for maintaining Transfer Station tasks, (4) Cemeteries, Downtown sidewalk and street sweeping, trash removal, and townwide rural roadside mowing.

2023 Accomplishments include:

- New curbing, sidewalk, and pavement on (lower) County Street (1,320 Linear Feet).
- Paved and widened the River Walkway as well as installed lighting (2,230 linear feet).
- Prepared other town roads for paving.
- Cleaned and vacuumed all storm drain catch basins with a new in-house vac truck.
- Installed new (or added) culverts in roads that were paved.
- Trimmed back and removed trees and or brush out of the Town’s rights-of-way.
- Cleaned out miles of drainage swales and ditches in rural areas of town.
- Replaced a failed culvert on East Street with a much larger corrugated metal culvert.
- Painted (60) miles of yellow lines and (60) miles of white fog lines with new in-house street painter.
- Filled the in-house Mechanic position.
- Purchased a used paver and did some in-house paving.
- Made numerous in-house repairs and insulation upgrades to the Public Works Garage.

2024 Goals

- Bridge replacement on Main Street at Beech Street.
- Install a total of (4) miles of new pavement on existing roads.
- Install total of (2,500) linear feet of new concrete curb and sidewalk on existing streets in town.
- Replace and install storm drainage in areas to be repaved.
- Help other departments when needed.
- Log more detailed Highway information into the Utility Cloud mapping system.
- Manage Town Forest Lands.
- Make improvements to the Benmont Avenue and Hunt Street intersection.
- Install new sidewalks on Main Street (south side) between Morgan Street and Valentine Street.
- Install new curb and sidewalk on the Safford Street (east side) between County Street and Gage Street.

Water

The Water Department has a (4) person crew, plus a Working Foreman. Together they are responsible for supplying clean drinking water to approximately 15,000 users through (92) miles of water main and (4,400) connections. The crew also runs and maintains the Water Filtration Plant in Woodford, (7) pumping stations and (5) water tanks throughout town. Additionally, they maintain and flush (semi-annually) approximately (650) fire hydrants. In 2020 we secured a Federal and State funded grant of \$11 million dollars to replace any remaining private lead service lines in town. This is a multi-phased project that continued in 2023 and is still on-going.

2023 Accomplishments include:

| | |
|---|----------------------|
| - Total hydrant repairs | 30 |
| - Installed fire/flushing hydrants | 1 |
| - Water main breaks/leak repairs | 9 |
| - Service line inspections for lead line replacements | Hundreds |
| - Lead service lines replacements to copper | 100 +/- |
| - Water system bacteria samples taken | 280 |
| - Total water produced | 635 million gallons |
| - Average water used per day | 1.73 million gallons |
| - Bulk water sold | 12.6 million gallons |
| - Utility Cloud System information updates and additions | |
| - Replaced Burgess Road pressure reducing valve with new vault on Main Street | |

2024 Goals

- Continue to add new information to the Utility Cloud mapping system
- Continue grant work on removing lead private service lines
- Install additional flushing hydrants on remaining dead-end water mains

- Relocating Morgan Spring Overflow Line.
- Replace a combined total of (2,800) feet of water main on Gage Street, Frank Street and Cross Street.
- Extend and install a new municipal water main for new service lines on Settlers Road and Spring Hill Road due to private well PFOA contamination.
- Begin planning the Filtration Plant Filter Replacement project, the existing four filters are now (46) years old.

Sewer

The Wastewater Crew is a (5) person crew plus a Laboratory Technician and a Chief Operator. Together they are responsible for treating over (1.59) billion gallons of wastewater each year through (67) miles of sanitary sewer mains. These sewer mains range in size from (4) inch to (36) inch. The crew also maintains (1,300) manholes and (5) pumping stations as well as running and maintaining the Town's on-site Sludge-Dewatering and Composting facility.

2023 Accomplishments include:

- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| - Sewer manholes rebuilt | 60 |
| - Sewer lines cleaned | 35,453 feet |
| - Sewer slip lining | 1,750 feet |
| - Total Wastewater treated | 1.59 billion gallons |
| - Average gallons per day | 4.36 MGD |
| - Average % BOD / Solids removed | 95.1% BOD / 93.2% TSS |
| - Compost made | 1,310 yards |
| - Septage Received from local haulers | 1.5 million gallons |
| - Replaced (280) feet of (8) inch sewer main on Greenview Drive (<i>in-house</i>) | |
| - Replaced (370) feet of (6) inch sewer main on Pleasant Street in the Village of North Bennington (<i>in-house</i>) | |
| - Replaced (65) feet of failing (15) inch clay sewer main with new PVC piping on Mckinley Street (<i>in-house</i>) | |
| - Purchased a used Vac truck which now allows us to jet and vacuum out sewer mains and manholes (<i>in-house</i>) | |
| - Replaced old and undersized septage pumps in our headworks building | |
| - Installed Cell modems on all (5) sewer pump station alarms for cost savings | |

2024 Goals

- Work on a replacement design for the (39) year-old sand filter process at plant.
- Rebuild and repair additional manholes throughout town.
- Camera and slip line troubled areas across town.
- Continue to use the Vac truck to clean collection system and identify potential trouble areas.
- Get the two primary digesters hooked up to emergency power.

Community Development

Shannon Barsotti, Director

The Office of Community Development administers the Town's Revolving Loan Programs, identifies grant opportunities with community partners, manages the Community Development Block Grant funding and Town marketing campaign, and acts as the Town's liaison to local, state, and federal agencies related to community and economic development. Activities in 2023 include:

Revolving Loan Program: The Town's Revolving Loan Program provides financing to businesses and individuals with limited access to commercial lines of credit, with the aim of nurturing small businesses and improving the housing stock. New loans in 2023 total \$260,000 for equipment, construction, and building repairs.

Community Development Block Grants: The Vermont Community Development Program awarded \$1 million to the Town in Recovery Housing/CDBG funds. These funds will be sub granted to Shires Housing for the development of recovery housing residences at 185 North Street and at 612 Gage Street. The Benn High Redevelopment was awarded a CDBG grant of \$386,190 for the affordable housing section of the project.

Downtown Riverwalk Improvements: The Town received a \$200,000 grant from the State's Downtown Transportation Fund for improvements to the Walloomsac pathway, including widening and repaving the path, adding lighting, and connecting to the new Rail Trail.

Benn High Redevelopment: The Town is partnering with Hale Resources, a local housing developer, on the redevelopment of Benn High, the old high school at 650 Main Street that has been vacant since 2005. The design prepared by Goldstone Architecture includes municipal/community space and residential space, which will have thirty-nine new apartments. The Town will lease 27,000 square feet of space for community recreation and senior programming.

This project was selected as a priority project for the use of the Town's American Rescue Plan Act funds. The Town also received a Community Partnership for Neighborhood Development grant of \$150,000 from the VT Agency of Commerce and Community for predevelopment work at Benn High. Representative Becca Balint's office nominated the Benn High project for \$1 million in Congressionally Directed Spending for FY24. Benn High was also chosen as a 2023 Vital Project by the Southern Vermont Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

Town-wide Marketing Campaign: The Town funded "Vermont Begins Here" digital marketing campaign includes a tourism website, social media, and monthly newsletter with an extensive listing of dining, lodging, shopping, Bennington area attractions, and resources for moving to Bennington. In 2023, town marketing funds also helped support new town welcome signs at each entrance to town.

Bennington Fair Food Initiative: The Town was awarded \$2.2 million in community project appropriations funding through Peter Welch's office to support economic and

workforce development projects in the farm and food sector at the Bennington Community Market, Southwest Tech, the Vermont Veterans Home, and Bennington College.

Historic Preservation Commission

Shannon Barsotti, Community Development Director

Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) members serve the Development Review Board, Select Board, and Planning Commission in an advisory capacity, and in so doing, help to coordinate activities that are important to Bennington's preservation goals for its historic and archaeological resources. As a participant in Vermont's Certified Local Government (CLG) Program, the HPC promotes the value of historic resources in local community development efforts.

The Bennington HPC maintains a page on the Town of Bennington website. The Commission's web page provides homeowners, residents, and developers with information and guidance for Bennington's historic downtown architecture, streetscapes, and historic resources. The resources on the website encourage the preservation of Bennington's architectural history and enable property owners to understand their historic buildings better and make informed choices in planning design changes to their buildings. The site includes the HPC's preservation manual, *Time and Place in Bennington: A Handbook for the Central Bennington Historic District*.

The Bennington HPC website can be viewed at: <http://benningtonvt.org/boards-commissions/hpc/>

Information Technology

Nick Cave, Director

The Information Technology (IT) department is responsible for all technology, connectivity, and communications for the Town of Bennington. IT supports all Town departments including Police, Fire, Water Filtration, and Sewer, and integrates services with the State of Vermont and other providers. Currently the IT department is comprised of 1 full-time and 1 part-time position. The focus of the IT department in 2023 was focused on a Disaster Recovery plan as well as ensuring we are following best practices as it relates to cyber security. Emphasis has been placed on scalability and flexibility of all systems and vendors. In my time here I have evaluated our current environment and begun to make improvements/modifications to ensure continued security of our resources. A large focus has been and will continue to be placed upon Disaster Recovery and eliminating any single point of failure within our network.

2023 Accomplishments

- Deployed 16 Desktop Computers, 5 MDT Computers, and 2 Smartboards within the Police Department.
- Improved network infrastructure with a new firewall, managed network switches, and enterprise grade wireless access points.
- Secure VPN to communicate with the State of Vermont.

- Deployed new Body Cameras for Officers and Vehicles.
- Installed Cellular Repeater.
- Replaced 4 aging computers at the Department of Public Works
- Installed 2 cellular repeaters and Wi-Fi throughout the building.
- Installed cellular repeaters, managed network equipment and wireless access points at Wastewater and Water Filtration.
- Installed new TV for Seniors from Shaftsbury Ballot
- Repaired senior center director Desktop Computer and installed new Wi-Fi equipment.
- Installed three new Desktops Computers for the Fire Chiefs and secured free wireless AP's
- Added Fire Chiefs to Town Domain.
- Replaced 5 Aging PC's with newer models and eliminated 2 duplicate PC's
- Installed private fiber to the Blacksmith Shop from the Town Offices for secure network connectivity.

2024 Goals

- Complete Transition to New MSP provider to include support of the Police Department.
- Complete deployment of VoIP infrastructure.
- Finish Deployment of Secure storage at all network locations including managed Battery Backup.
- Finalize and deploy the Disaster Recovery Plan and ensure our backups and failovers are tested regularly.
- MDM deployment for all devices that access Town information systems.
- Expansion of Office 365 environment and increased internal control of all databases.
- Finalize policies for the IT department and management of all Town of Bennington information systems.
- Move to E-Faxing and updated alarm panels to allow for removal of expensive copper connections.
- Establish reserve funds for large line-item purchases such as computers and network equipment.
- Identify and Implement Electronic Time and Attendance software.

The IT department has a long list of goals to accomplish in 2024 and is off to a good start. The last 8 months have been a time of discovery and making changes to existing processes. We are now beginning to start implementation of projects identified during 2023. We will continue to evaluate and prioritize projects essential to security and flexibility of all town operations.

Communications Coordinator

Jonah Spivak

The role of the Town Communications Coordinator is first and foremost to share information about the activities the town is doing on behalf of our community. This includes using all available media channels to get information out to the public, as well as fulfilling any public records requests. Responsibilities include managing the Town's website, assisting in social media, creating press releases, and developing graphics, signage, and materials as needed.

Over the past year I have assisted on several special projects including assisting in development of town communications policy, outreach on the Benn High project, a ribbon cutting celebrating the opening of the new Rail Trail, coordinating the second annual Trailfest, working on 250th anniversary related projects, helping with the Town Plan update, and completing and presenting the 2023 Bennington Community Survey.

I also help promote and, in some cases, help organize regular ongoing events such as the Fourth of July, Memorial Day, Battle Day, Veterans Day, and Town Meeting Day. Most of this promotion is through local media and online with social media. Facebook is our primary social media channel which was mostly inactive when I first came on board. Since September of 2021, our likes and follows have increased by 1,148 to a total of 5,628 on January 9 of 2024. Over that same time, our posts had a reach of 216,376 and 41,540 visits to our Facebook page. In our 2023 Community Survey, 60% of respondents identified Facebook as their primary source of Town information.

The position of Communications Coordinator is still relatively new. I welcome thoughts and feedback on how I can be doing my job better and I am honored to do this work on behalf of the residents of our community.

Parks and Recreation

Parks

Paul Dansereau, Facilities Manager

The Town operates and maintains multiple parks, playgrounds, athletic fields, trails, and green spaces. Some specific locations include Willow Park, Merchant Park/Splashpad, Stark Street Playground, Headwaters Park, Greenberg Reserve, Beech Street Ballfield, and the Ninja Trail. This past year saw the completion of two significant projects. The first was the new Willow Park Upper and Lower Playgrounds were completed and saw significant use over the Summer and Fall. The second was the completion of the Rail Trail project that provides both a walking and bike path opportunity in Bennington that connects with other Trail networks and attractions.

Senior Center

Carrie Fabricius, Program Director

It is the mission of the Bennington Senior Center to engage persons 50+ in the lifelong learning process and promote their physical, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing by providing social, recreational, creative, and cultural programs. This enables active participation in the center and community. Program costs are based on a non-profit basis. There are no fees or dues. We continue to meet our goals through increasing participation, passionate instruction, and a variety of programming.

The center is town-owned, taxpayer-funded and currently on the second floor (Suite 3) of the Senior Citizens' Service Center at 124 Pleasant Street. Activities offered include crafts, trivia, painting, ukulele, card and board games, BINGO, and movies. We schedule shopping and dining trips every month, as well as artistic displays and cultural performances. We also provide opportunities for domestic and world travel at economical prices.

To foster the social wellbeing of our members we offer monthly potluck luncheons, encourage involvement and volunteerism, and have slowly been rebuilding/restructuring our programs.

In addition to our annual trips to Mac-Haydn Theatre, Lake George Steamboat, and The Mystery Ride, we had multi-day trips to Memphis/Nashville, Seneca Lake, and Mt. Washington, NH.

Our “Coffee With...” series on the first Friday of each month has been a great success. Town officials or community organization leaders speak about the current state of their work, and seniors get direct access to ask questions and/or voice concerns. Speakers in 2023 included Town Manager Stuart Hurd, Bennington Police Chief Paul Doucette and Lieutenant Camillo Grande, Bennington Free Library librarians Linda Donigan and Karson Kiesinger, McCullough Library director Jennie Rozycki, Community Market manager Natasha Garder Littrell, and leaders of the YMCA, VNAHSR, and SVCOA.

The current wellness agenda includes classes for RSVP Bone Builders, a walking program, a monthly foot clinic provided by VNA/Hospice of the Southwest Region, and education programs supported by the Council on Aging, SASH, and various community partners. The YMCA has expanded fitness offerings for seniors, and classes are held in the former Catamount Elementary School building at 230 School Street and in the pool at the Bennington Community Center on Gage Street.

Currently, the Senior Center is composed of 1 full-time employee and 10 volunteers for various programs, activities, and office duties. We must not fail to show our appreciation for the thousands of hours of unpaid time provided by our volunteers, and more importantly for their talent, humor, and patience. The Senior Center would not be the same without each individual. I would not be able to do this job without them, and we earnestly thank them again for another year.

The goals of any director are increased worth, continued improvement and forward progression for their facility. I believe our seniors support my goals as I endeavor to provide these three things. Each citizen of Bennington is welcome to visit the Senior Center to find out how we enhance the lives of our seniors. They are also encouraged to scan our newsletter, *Bennington Senior & Community News*, for information about our programs. This newsletter is now distributed through the Bennington Banner and can be found at the Senior Center (124 Pleasant Street), the Bennington Community Center (655 Gage Street), and the Town Offices (205 South Street). Links to the Senior & Community News can also be found on the town website, www.benningtonvt.org and on the Bennington Banner website at www.benningtonbanner.com/banners/.

The YMCA

Kayla Becker, Bennington Branch Director

Through a management agreement, the Berkshire Family YMCA supports recreation opportunities in Bennington. The Y manages staff and operations at the Rec Center as well as additional programs throughout the community. In partnership, the Town and the Y rent space at the old Catamount Elementary School (Bennington Sports Center) to offer group exercise classes, youth programming, and community sports.

The Town maintains facilities and works in partnership with the Y to provide increased programs and opportunities for recreation at the Rec, playgrounds, athletic fields and trails, and parks.

This summer, the summer youth camp grew to serve over 350 children with an average of 150 campers each week. The Y partnered with SVSU to offer Summer Recovery for the third summer. The Y partnered with VSNB and SVSU to continue afterschool programming that grew to serve over 140 children. Youth programs offered included soccer, baseball, playgroups, swim lessons, conditioning, teen leadership, birthday pool parties, basketball, school break camps, Kids Night Out, and pop-up special events. The Y worked with MAYAA basketball to assist in operations and management of the popular youth program. Popular events for local families were the egg hunt in the pool, Pumpkin Splash, SplashMas, Healthy Kids Day.

Utilizing additional spaces in the Town of Bennington, the Y continued to expand program offerings for all ages. Classes include Water Exercise, Water Aerobics, Yoga, Silver Sneakers, Boot Camp, QiGong, Active Indoor Walking, Strength & Balance, Chair Yoga. Social programming for adults and seniors grew as the Y worked with the Bennington Senior Center and Meals on Wheels.

The Town's financial support for Bennington and North Bennington residents continues to reduce Resident member rates. The year ended with over 1,300 memberships serving over 2,000 individuals. The number of family and youth memberships increased most significantly, and senior memberships remain popular as well. The Town continues to manage the rental of pavilions and fields.

Sollwan and Mary Alexander Sleeman Memorial Fund

This Fund was created in September 1998, in concert with the Richard A. Sleeman family from funds historically collected to complete the Recreation Center (formerly owned by the YMCA). As custodian of the funds, Richard A. Sleeman preserved them and helped established this Fund to assist the Town with accessibility issues at the Recreation Center. The Fund guidelines follow below.

- 1. This memorial fund is for the exclusive use of the Bennington Community Recreation Center located on Gage Street in Bennington, Vermont.*
- 2. Special consideration will be given to benefit the handicapped through capital improvements, equipment, or tuition for those in need as it relates to the Recreation Center.*
- 3. The Fund will be expended on a ten (10) year annuitized basis for the uses noted above.*
- 4. Dr. Richard Alexander Sleeman, Professor, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, North Adams, Massachusetts, represents the Sleeman Family.*

The original Fund contained \$52,156.27. During this year, \$79.92 was expended at the Recreation Center. Interest earned was added to the Fund leaving a reserve fund balance of \$1,463.77.

Permitting, Planning & Code Enforcement

Paul Dansereau, Building Inspector/Deputy Health Officer/Fire Marshal

Bridget Gallant, Building Inspector/Health Officer/ Fire Marshal

| Permit Type | 2022 Permits | Dollar Volume | 2023 Permits | Dollar Volume |
|------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| Single Family Dwelling | 6 | \$1,625,000.00 | 8 | \$1,440,000.00 |
| Duplex | 0 | \$0.00 | 0 | \$0.00 |
| Mobile Homes | 5 | \$437,100.00 | 11 | \$750,086.15 |
| Apartments | 0 | \$0.00 | 3 | \$310,000.00 |
| Apartment Renovations | 9 | \$332,100.00 | 18 | \$2,435,752.00 |
| Condominiums | 0 | \$0.00 | 0 | \$0.00 |
| Residential Renovations | 18 | \$938,859.00 | 23 | \$742,310.00 |
| Residential Additions | 7 | \$903,800.14 | 1 | \$80,000.00 |
| Commercial Construction | 4 | \$2,195,000.00 | 6 | \$3,212,509.00 |
| Commercial Renovations | 20 | \$3,262,458.00 | 26 | \$2,070,621.00 |
| Industrial Construction | 1 | \$608,898.00 | 0 | \$0.00 |
| Industrial Renovations | 3 | \$72,900.00 | 0 | \$0.00 |
| Garages | 12 | \$373,600.00 | 13 | \$507,960.00 |
| Sheds | 20 | \$102,294.00 | 27 | \$167,664.00 |
| Decks | 14 | \$150,250.00 | 32 | \$325,368.85 |
| Institutions | 0 | \$0.00 | 4 | \$1,578,892.00 |
| Signs | 33 | \$112,791.00 | 21 | \$52,503.00 |
| Use and Zoning | 13 | \$48,274,750.00 | 9 | \$31,154,689.00 |
| Subdivisions | 4 | \$0.00 | 9 | \$0.00 |
| Home Occupation | 1 | \$0.00 | 1 | \$50.00 |
| Propane Tank/Storage Tank | 0 | \$0.00 | 1 | \$320,000.00 |
| Boilers/Furnaces, A/C, RTU's | 6 | \$97,050.00 | 5 | \$3,486,479.77 |
| Tents | 6 | \$25,605.00 | 9 | \$27,733.00 |
| Handicap Access/Ramps | 3 | \$16,000.00 | 4 | \$10,828.00 |
| Concreate Slabs | 0 | \$0.00 | 0 | \$0.00 |
| Cell Towers | 0 | \$0.00 | 0 | \$0.00 |
| Solar Installations | 13 | \$412,599.25 | 26 | \$1,063,581.54 |
| Camps | 0 | \$0.00 | 1 | \$20,000.00 |
| Demolition | 23 | \$0.00 | 36 | \$0.00 |
| Fire Suppression | 7 | \$0.00 | 6 | \$0.00 |
| Sprinkler System | 4 | \$0.00 | 4 | \$0.00 |
| Exhaust Hood | 3 | \$0.00 | 5 | \$0.00 |
| Fire Alarm | 10 | \$0.00 | 2 | \$0.00 |
| Totals | 249 | \$59,941,054.39 | 288 | \$49,757,027.31 |

Health Officer

Bridget Gallant, Health Officer
Paul Dansereau, Deputy Health Officer

The Health Officer is the Town Official who is responsible for Public Health Problems in Town. Health Officers have the power of the Vermont Commissioner of Health and are agents of the State Health Department. Health Officers have the authority to enforce any of the Vermont Health regulations in their town. The Select Board is the local Board of Health with the Health Officer serving as the secretary and Executive Officer for Bennington, North Bennington, and Old Bennington. The responsibilities of the Health Officer can be wide ranging, however, most of the time is spent in the following categories:

Rabies Management

We received and investigated 73 reported animal bites to humans in 2023, 45 from dogs, 19 from cats, 7 from bats, 1 from a raccoon, and 1 from a pig. This compares to 49 in 2022, 55 in 2021, 42 in 2020, 36 in 2019, 39 in 2018, 47 in 2017, 52 in 2016, 46 in 2015, 38 in 2014. We want to remind medical providers that all bites must be reported within 24 hours.

Rental Housing

We investigated numerous complaints pertaining to Rental Housing Health Code issues. The Vermont Rental Housing Health Code is a State-wide uniform code that specifies the minimum standards for all rental housing. As the Building Inspectors and Fire Marshals for the town, we can now include the Health Code Requirements in all these types of inspections.

Other Public Health Issues

The balance of time was spent investigating such matters as garbage complaints, inadequate heat, rodent/roach/bed bug complaints, lead, mold, and asbestos concerns from tenants in rental housing.

Another persistent health concern is dry scraping and power washing of exterior paint containing lead. We remind all residents that this practice is illegal in the State of Vermont. We were successful in obtaining voluntary compliance with almost all public health problems this year and appreciate the cooperation from all involved. Please feel free to contact us regarding any questions or concerns you may have.

Notes:

Planning

Daniel W. Monks, Permitting Director

The Planning Commission, along with the Planning Department, performs municipal planning functions for Bennington, including the development of the Town Plan and Land Use and Development Regulations.

In 2023, The Planning Department continued to work with consultants on several bike/ped projects that will serve as the backbone for a bike/ped network in Bennington. The Rail/Trail project from the Bennington Station to Northside Drive was completed in the Spring of 2023. The next phase of the Ninja Path is scheduled to be constructed in 2024.

In 2023, work on Phase 1 of the development of a new Town Plan with a focus on diversity, equity and inclusion issues commenced. A scope of work was developed, and the Town contracted with the Bennington County Regional Commission to perform Phase 1 of the project - outreach to the community to identify key themes that will provide a framework for the plan while informing recommended policies, actions, and priorities. Late in 2023, the Town applied for and received a Municipal Planning Grant for Phase 2 of the new Town Plan - drafting a new Town Plan based on the results of Phase 1. Phase 2 will commence when Phase 1 is completed and is scheduled to wrap up in August of 2025. The Planning Commission also continued its support of numerous ongoing efforts to construct trails, bike paths, and sidewalks.

The Development Review Board is responsible for reviewing and issuing land use permits for all significant development within the Town. Among the projects reviewed in 2023 by the Development review Board were: two new restaurants (Starbucks and Chipotle) at 108 Northside Drive, the redevelopment of the former Benn High building at 650 Main Street, a new Credit Union building at 200 North Street, a new Hoffman Carwash at 217-219 Northside Drive, and a new training facility building at the Benning Little League complex.

Board of Listers

John M. Antognioni, Assessor

With no reassessment activity in 2023, this office sent 139 Change of Appraised Value notices to property owners on June 12, 2023. These notices were sent to owners of property in which a material change, or error/omission had occurred from April 1, 2022, to April 1, 2023. The Board of Listers had 21 property grievances, 1 of which was forwarded to the Bennington Board of Civil Authority. There are no outstanding grievances for 2023 or for prior years.

The Town of Bennington's taxable grand list for 2023 of all properties was \$1,026,629,525. The State's Equalization Study for 2023 (effective January 1, 2024) shows Bennington's common level of appraisal at 69.57 percent and our coefficient of dispersion at 23.72 percent. The common level of appraisal is essentially a measure of how close local assessments are to sale prices (which have continued to rise sharply over the past few years). The coefficient of dispersion measures uniformity of assessments for all grand list property and is the average deviation of a group of ratios from the town-wide median expressed as a

percentage of the median. The 2023 Equalization Study used sales data from April 1, 2020, to March 31, 2023.

Because our Common Level of Appraisal in 2023 had falling below 85%, as well as a Coefficient of Dispersion above 20%, the Town of Bennington was notified by the State of Vermont on July 21, 2023, that an order to reappraise is issued, requiring for a town-wide reassessment of properties. The last reassessment was completed in 2008. A request for proposal (RFP) is being formulated to be sent to Vermont State Tax Department's Property & Valuation Review Division's list of Approved Appraisal Firms for a Town-Wide Reappraisal.

Peter Green and Carol Holm were members of the Board of Listers for 2023.

Town Clerk

Cassandra Barbeau, Town Clerk

In the past year, the Town Clerk's Office completed our conversion of the land records to a digital system hosted by Cotts RecordHub. It was the culmination of over two years of research, ARPA funding and implementation, which includes over 40 years of land records. It was prompted by Clerks Offices around the state being shuttered due to COVID, during one of the strongest real estate markets in our time. This service has allowed Realtors, attorneys, appraisers, and lenders the access to records from their offices at any time with a user subscription. Kayla and I have spent time over recent months training users in the office to make them comfortable. It also limits the use of physical records, protecting them from potential damage and keeping them safe for future generations. As time allows, Kayla and I have also been able to add additional documents to the service working our way back in time. It was something I was not in a rush to do but the ARPA funding allowed us to save the taxpayers approximately \$170,000. I am excited and proud of the end product.

Looking toward 2024, our office will have a busy election year. Remember, absentee ballots must be requested by the voter for any election other than the November 5th General Election. If you wish to vote by early ballot, call the Town Clerk's Office at (802)442-1043 or log on to your voter page at mvp.vermont.gov. Ballots for State and Federal elections are available forty-five days ahead of the election. Also remember, this March 5th is the Presidential Primary. The Primary is simply a party nominating process. It is the ONE time you will be asked which party ballot you wish to cast. Do not be alarmed. We do not register by party in Vermont, and you are not tied to any particular party if you choose to mark that party ballot on March 5th.

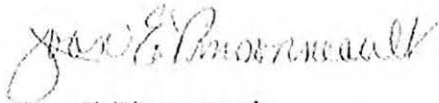
As always, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

TOWN OF BENNINGTON
OFFICE OF THE TREASURER
205 South Street
Bennington, VT 05201
802-442-1037

Cash Flow and Account Balances as of June 30, 2023

| | |
|--|------------------------|
| CASH FLOW: | 07/01/22 - 06/30/23 |
| Beginning Balance | \$10,695,424.10 |
| ADD: | |
| Interest | \$190,979.80 |
| Various Town receipts | \$43,107,405.61 |
| Total available cash | <u>\$53,993,809.51</u> |
| | |
| SUBTRACT: | |
| Disbursements: | |
| Payroll Warrants | \$8,306,056.45 |
| Vendor Warrants | \$29,175,467.66 |
| Excess Proceeds from Tax Sales | \$115,418.63 |
| Prepaid checks | \$2,639,829.81 |
| Vendor payments - Choice Strategies | \$231,739.86 |
| Bank Analysis Fees - Fraud Protection & Positive Pay | \$323.01 |
| Total Disbursements | <u>\$40,468,835.42</u> |
| | |
| Cash Balance on June 30, 2023 | <u>\$13,524,974.09</u> |

Respectfully submitted,



Joan E. Pinsonneault
Town Treasurer

Agencies

The Select Board approved the following agency appropriations totaling \$824,390.00 to be included within the Town of Bennington's General Fund in FY 2024:

Bennington Free Library - \$512,940.00
Bennington Rescue Squad - \$226,870.00
John G. McCullough Free Library - \$42,500.00
Bennington County Regional Commission (BCRC) - \$33,380.00
North Bennington Recreation - \$6,000.00
Paran Recreations, Inc - \$2,700.00

The Bennington voters approved the following agency appropriations totaling \$131,850.00. to be included within the Town of Bennington's General Fund in FY 2024:

Bennington County Coalition for the Homeless - \$25,000.00
Bennington Area Visiting Nurse Association & Hospice - \$21,600.00
Sunrise Family Resource Center - \$15,000.00
Bennington Free Clinic - \$12,500.00
Bennington Project Independence - \$11,000.00
The Tutorial Center - \$10,000.00
Southwestern Vermont Council on Aging, Inc. - \$7,500.00
Vermont Center for Independent Living - \$7,000.00
BROC - Community Action in Southwestern Vermont - \$6,750.00
Green Mountain Retired and Senior Volunteer Program - \$5,500.00
Bennington County Association Against Child Abuse - \$5,000.00
Project Against Violent Encounters - \$5,000.00

Notes:

**TOWN OF BENNINGTON
2023 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
BENNINGTON FIRE FACILITY
RIVER STREET, BENNINGTON, VERMONT 05201
MARCH 6, 2023
MINUTES**

MODERATOR: Jason Morrissey

ALSO PRESENT: Bennington Select Board Members - Jeannie Jenkins-Chair; Jeanne Conner-Vice Chair; Jim Carroll; Bruce Lee-Clark; Sarah Perrin; Tom Haley; and Gary Corey; Stuart Hurd-Town Manager; Dan Monks-Assistant Town Manager; Joan Pinsonneault-Treasurer; Cassandra Barbeau-Town Clerk; Shannon Barsotti-Community Development Director; Jonah Spivak-Communication Coordinator; Kristal Hier and Laurie Benjamin- ASL Interpreters; Bill Camarda-Bennington Rescue Squad; Mr. Rzyzki; Charles Kozloski; San Restino; Nancy White; Ned Perkins; Lorna Charitin; Jenna Caslin; Lindsey Brillon; Lenora Volkmer; Tom Donahue; Charles Murphy; Ron Hache; Sean-Marie Oller; Matt Bentley; Linda Putney; Charlie Gingo; Jonathan Cooper; Jessica Fredette; Chloe Viner Collins; ~100 citizens; Mike Cutler-CAT-TV; and Nancy H. Lively-Secretary.

1. MODERATOR OPENS MEETING; READS WARNING

At 7:03 p.m., Moderator Jason Morrissey called the meeting to order and Judge Justine Scanlon led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Morrissey read the following Warning:

**WARNING
TOWN OF BENNINGTON
2023 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING**

The residents of the Town of Bennington qualified by law to vote in Town Meeting are hereby notified and warned to meet in said Town on Monday, March 6, 2023 at 7:00 p.m., (or immediately following the Southwest VT Regional Technical School District's Annual meeting should that run over) to transact the business specified to be done from the floor. Provisions for the hearing impaired will be in place for this meeting.

Following the completion of such business, the Meeting will stand adjourned to Tuesday, March 7, 2023, at The Bennington Fire Facility on River Street (Lincoln Street entrance). The polls are open from 7:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. for the election of officers and voting on all ballot articles specified. However, those on the checklist to vote in the Village of North Bennington shall vote for the election of officers and on all ballot articles at the North Bennington Village Office on Main Street in North Bennington. The Bennington Fire Facility above mentioned, is hereby established as the central polling place for those on the checklist to vote in said Bennington. Residents of Bennington and North Bennington may register to vote at the Town Clerk's Office, 205 South Street, Bennington, Vermont. Eligible residents registering on Election Day must do so at the polling place where they will cast their Town Meeting ballot.

BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED FROM THE "FLOOR"

Monday, March 6, 2023

7:00 P.M.

ARTICLE 1. TOWN REPORT: To hear the report of Town Officers.

Charles Kozloski: Noted that an 8.75% increase in the FY2024 Budget and \$5.8M for the water is a "hefty bunch for us to assimilate". Is the 2% administration fee what we will actually be paying? Mr. Hurd: Yes. When we borrow money from the State from the Water and Sewer Fund, they charge a 2% fee on top of the principal and interest payments.

Charles Kozloski: Strongly recommends to the Board to consider water meters so that everyone pays their fair share because we may have a water problem in the future. Mr. Hurd: The Board has considered putting on meters to all connections to the Town's system. At the present time we meter only multi-residential and commercial firms. We do not meter single family dwellings. Bennington's water supply can supply 6.1M gallons/day and we're currently using ~2.9M gallons/day.

Charles Kozloski: How much of the Federal Infrastructure Bill actually reached Bennington? Mr. Hurd: One could argue that the \$5.8M that we're borrowing from the State is part of that. We don't have eligibility standards developed by the State to qualify for any additional funds at this time. Most of these funds are currently going for State paving and bridge projects.

Charles Kozloski: What is the conviction rate from the 929 criminal arrests? Mr. Hurd: Neither I or the Chief of Police can answer that. It is a question for the State's Attorney's Office.

Sam Restino: Was the increase in the budget driven by inflation and infrastructure? Mr. Hurd: Yes, it was driven principally by inflation. Infrastructure in the General, Highway, and Fire Fund is generally for sidewalks and highways. Other projects, like the water project, are paid for from the Water and Sewer Fund which is not impacting the budget before you tonight.

Sam Restino: Will we be able to find funding from the State in the next year or year after that? Mr. Hurd: It is unlikely that we will find grants that will completely fund infrastructure projects, however, the two water projects that we have presented tonight are funded by the State from Federal money through grants with a minor 2% fee. This is a break for us because interest rates are now 5%-6%.

Sam Restino: Will Bennington residents see an increase in their water and sewer bills because of infrastructure? Mr. Hurd: There will be a savings of \$141,000 in expenses if this bond is approved.

Sam Restino: Is disappointed in the turnout this evening and encourages our leaders to educate newcomers to the Town on how our government works. And we need to tighten our budget.

Sam Restino: Noted the fire that recently took place on Northside Drive. How did the "exuberant" amounts of water used on that fire affect our water supply? Mr. Hurd: Normally, high water flows in our downtown area or Northside Drive, may have affected people on Crescent Boulevard, Jefferson Heights, and Margaret Lane area that may have seen a

pressure drop. That is why we hope the voters approve the \$5.8M bond so we can address that in our water system.

Nancy White: The 8.75% increase in the budget is not due to inflation. It is due to the Select Board choosing not to cut the budget when town officials gave it to them. I hope the voters do the job that the Select Board didn't do for us.

Ned Perkins: Reviewed the loan agreement for the Bennington Community Market with the revolving loan information document on the Town's website and the Select Board Minutes when the loan agreement was executed. Revolving loans have a normal maximum loan amount of \$35,000 with an interest rate of 50% of prime plus 2 points and a maximum term of 15 years. It also says that if the Development Director and the loan committee accept the loan application, it is forwarded to the Select Board for a decision. The loan amount for the Bennington Community Market is \$200,000 with a 0% interest rate for a term of 20 years. This decision was not in the Select Board Minutes when the transaction took place. Nancy White questioned this and was told that this is policy driven that the Board does not have to approve the revolving loans. That contradicts the published policy.

Mr. Perkins asked the Board - 1. Did you approve the loan? 2. Were the published procedures for granting the loan properly followed? 3. Were you aware the loan was at 0% interest rate? 4. Were you aware that the 1st payment has already been pushed back 6 months to July 15, 2023? 5. Did the Community Development Director act within her authority when she executed the note?

Ms. Jenkins: The Select Board does not make the final decision on a revolving loan. The revolving loan was set up over 40 years ago to assist new and existing businesses to be successful in our community. We are a lender of last resort after businesses have obtained all of the funding they can get from other sources. The success rate has been "phenomenal" at over 90%. The information that the Select Board makes a decision on these loans is inaccurate. The decision currently lies with the Community Development Director and previously with the Economic and Community Development Director. The Select Board does review the applications in Executive Session where all of the appropriate questions/concerns are asked of the Community Development Director. No one who is applying for a loan should have their confidential information aired at a meeting open to the public.

Mr. Hurd: The Select Board does have the authority to veto a proposal and request more information. Then, if the Board has no objection, we are authorized to issue the loan and waive any of the requirements that Mr. Perkins has read. We currently have over \$500,000 available to loan.

Ms. Perrin: Thanked Mr. Perkins for bringing up what needed to be corrected.

Nancy White: The revolving loans are not only available to businesses, they are available to homeowners and landlords, as well. The Select Board should be approving loans over \$100,000 and the basics should be heard at public meetings.

Jonah Spivak and Shannon Barsotti presented the following Town Reports:

- The Town's Vision Statement is:
 - ✓ "Bennington is a welcoming, engaged, inclusive, resilient community where everyone regardless of identity shares in our vitality and benefits from an outstanding quality of life."
 - Bennington is Vermont's first town, chartered in 1749 and settled in 1761. Samuel Robinson saw what would be Bennington on his way to fight in the French and Indian War.
- BENNINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT -
 - Community Policing initiatives while working closely with the Community Policing Advisory Review Board (CPARB) has been the focus of the Police Department for the last two years. Recently work has been done to develop all new policies, procedures, and handling complaints.
 - Even though still short staffed, two new officers have been hired, as well as a human trafficking position.
 - Hosted summer camps and events where the community and police co-mingled.
- FIRE DEPARTMENT -
 - The all-volunteer department of men and women, referred to as the "modern day militia men" respond to hundreds of calls each year that include fires, vehicle crashes, police and medical assists among others.
 - They have made the Bennington Battle Day weekend a town tradition for 58 years.
 - Provided fire prevention training in 5 of our area schools reaching out to 125 students.
 - Anyone interested in becoming a member should contact an existing member or call the fire department for information.
- DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS -
 - Highway Department maintains all roads (120 miles), curbs, sidewalks (41 miles), and vegetation along the road.
 - Projects included installing a sewer main, drainage, curb, sidewalks and paving on Maple Street.
 - Rebuilt Franklin Lane and managed over 500 acres of town forest land.
 - The Water Department's ability to harness water was a major factor in the early industrialization of Bennington.
 - Our water is now a revenue stream as we sell our excess Morgan Spring water to water bottling companies with its location shown here on an 1891 map along with our current water source from Bolles Brook which goes to our water treatment facility.
 - We treat and deliver an average of 1.4M gallons of water/day to Bennington residents.
 - Residents may have a flat rate amounting to \$1.71/day, or ~\$20/month less than the average U.S. citizen pays.
 - Residents can choose to switch to a meter system, whereas, commercial and multi-residential facilities are all metered.
 - The State is requiring us to upgrade the water system on Gage, Jefferson Heights, and Margaret Lane. The \$5.8M bond vote will enable us to do this faster and more economically.
 - The Wastewater Treatment Plant treats 4M to 4.5M gallons of wastewater per day.
 - Residents pay \$1.61/day for sewage services, or ~\$8/month less than the average U.S. citizen pays.
 - Much work has been done at the Treatment Plant including replacing the primary digester, replacing pumps and piping, and replacing the rotation biological contactors (RBC's).

- Please do not flush the flushable wipes....they are not flushable.
- PLANNING DEPARTMENT -
 - The Rail/Trail Project from Bennington Station to Northside Drive is now complete and the Ninja Trail is being worked on.
 - Worked on the redevelopment of Southern Vermont College.
 - Worked with the Planning Commission and Development Review Board to develop the Town Plan and Land Use and Development Regulations with a focus on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.
- COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT -
 - Tasks include:
 - Downtown development, community recreation, and expanding affordable housing.
 - We have \$3.2M of investments in the Downtown with public and private investors.
 - Manage the grant funding and the revolving loan fund.
 - Work closely with the YMCA, the Senior Center, Vermont Council on Aging, and Meals on Wheels.
 - The YMCA manages all of our recreation at the Recreation Center, a Seniors Program at the Bennington Sports Center, and programs for all ages at the Benn Hi building.
 - A new history of the arts and recreation kiosk has been completed.
 - We have received grants for the Riverwalk and Recreation Center, as well as grants for housing and recovery housing.
 - The Communication Coordinator's position is to get information out to the community, handle social media, and help with the design of the new website.
 - A good example of our community coming together is when every head stone that had recently been vandalized at the Village Cemetery had been righted.
- OTHERS -
 - Buildings and Grounds manages all of the multiple parks, fields, buildings, and projects throughout the Town.
 - The Town Office was built in 1844 and donated to the Town for municipal use in 1920 and is the root of our Town Government located at 205 South Street. Town records back 261 years are housed there.
 - Our several Boards and Commissions are made up of many citizens who are volunteering their time to serve in these areas.

Public comments/questions:

Sam Restino: So, we no longer have an Economic Development position, correct? Ms. Jenkins: We work with the Bennington County Regional Commission (BCRC) which is county wide. Economic Development and Community Development are very closely tied, and both sides suffer. Community Development has served us well. Mr. Restino: "Trust comes from transparency and communication". "We need some serious Economic Development in this town."

Nancy White: BCRC doesn't have a report in our Town Report. "We should not have a county regional group in charge of our town's economy." They are pushing a state agenda, and this isn't always the best for Bennington. The taxpayers have always paid for everything, and economics should be our number one goal in Bennington. Ms. Jenkins: "Community

development is housing, is economic development.” We have made improvements to recreation, attention to youth and seniors, attention to housing, and the revolving loan fund.

Charles Kozloski: Agreed that Economic Development and Community Development “are inseparable”. The Use and Zoning Permits went from \$25M in 2021 to \$48M in 2022 which indicates that there is something happening in this town, and these figures prove it.

Lorna Charitin: Ms. Barsotti’s and Mr. Spivak’s presentation did reflect how our government works and how it is communicating to the citizens. There has been a lot of negativity tonight - especially from two individuals - where they’ve raised a number of points. We certainly need to have citizens watching the Select Board’s performance, however, “I think the Select Board is doing a great job” including responding professionally and civilly to questions. If this negativity continues to be directed to the Select Board, “we’re not going to get good candidates willing to serve”.

Bill Camarda, Bennington Rescue Squad Interim Executive Director: Thanked the Town for its support and explained that the Executive Director position has been eliminated, we’re replacing 5 of the “big box ambulances with the more economical van ambulances and will drop down to a fleet of 5 units. We’re training people from the community to join Bennington Rescue. Thank you for your support.

Jennie Roczyski’s husband: Spoke in his wife’s absence to thank the Town for their support of the Park McCullough Free Library’s level funding request.

ARTICLE 2. OTHER BUSINESS: To transact such other proper business when met.

**BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED BY BALLOT
TUESDAY, MARCH 7, 2023
THE POLLS TO BE OPEN FROM 7:00 A.M. TO 7:00 P.M.
AT THE POLLING PLACES SPECIFIED ABOVE**

SELECT BOARD ELECTION. Two Select Board Members residing in the Town shall be elected for a term of three (3) years.

ARTICLE 1. Shall the Town appropriate for the next fiscal year, July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024, the total sum of \$16,135,310.00 consisting of the following: \$4,853,340.00 for the laying out, maintaining, and repairing of the highways and bridges of the Town; and \$11,281,970.00 for the payment of the following: Any indebtedness not otherwise specifically provided for, interest on indebtedness, legally authorized State and County taxes, the prosecution and defense of the common rights and interests of the inhabitants of the Town, and for other necessary incidental expenses?

The proposed budget includes \$25,000.00 for fire equipment, \$5,000.00 for fire facilities, \$10,000.00 for technology improvements, \$426,100.00 for healthcare reserve and workers compensation insurance, \$80,000.00 for bridges and \$2,000.00 for well maintenance, any unexpended portion of which will be reserved to subsequent years for that purpose.

ARTICLE 2. Shall the bonds of the Town of Bennington in an amount not to exceed \$5.8 million be issued for the purpose of upgrading the Gage Street water main and upgrading the water system in the south end (Jefferson Heights and Margaret Lane) to increase water pressure within the system.

ARTICLE 3. Shall the voters increase the F.Y. 2024 General Fund by the sum of \$5,000.00 for Bennington County Association Against Child Abuse?

Jenna Caslin spoke to the work that the Bennington County Association Against Child Abuse does by serving victims of sexual abuse and child victims of egregious physical abuse and neglect. We work with clients from the time of disclosure to the disposition of their case and often times beyond that. We also provide education for prevention, outreach, and support groups. For more information, our website is www.bcaac.org.

ARTICLE 4. Shall the voters increase the F.Y. 2024 General Fund by the sum of \$5,000.00 for Project Against Violent Encounters?

Lindsey Brillon stated that PAVE provides services to survivors of domestic and sexual abuse in Bennington County. Over the past year, PAVE has realized the increased violence in Bennington which include domestic and sexual abuse. Lack of economic opportunity, substance abuse, and lack of mental health treatment are all contributors. All agencies must partner together to work toward a solution to the problem. We have seen 1 survivor/day we were open with 110 of the survivors being from Bennington. We continue to provide our 24 hour crisis line and provide shelter to clean survivors. We taught 350 students healthy relationships in our schools on how to prevent abuse.

ARTICLE 5. Shall the voters increase the F.Y. 2024 General Fund by the sum of \$5,500.00 for Green Mountain Retired and Senior Volunteer Program?

Lenora Volkmer cited all of the beneficial work that the volunteers do for the community, such as, tax assistance, delivering meals and supporting the café for Meals on Wheels, supporting the American Red Cross blood drives, working with the Vermont Council on Aging, helping at the food pantry at St. Frances deSales Church and Sacred Heart Church, books on wheels, Sunshine cards, support to the Bennington Free Library, the Senior Center, Bennington Museum, Bennington Project Independence, Better Bennington Corporation, and Greater Bennington Community Services. For more information, visit our website, www.rsvpvt.org..

ARTICLE 6. Shall the voters increase the F.Y. 2024 General Fund by the sum of \$6,750.00 for BROCC - Community Action in Southwestern Vermont?

Tom Donahue stated that “the foundation of a community is only as strong as how we treat our most vulnerable”. BROCC helps people in crisis and then provides a sustainable path forward. This past year we have worked with Molly Stark and the four family engaged specialists at SVSU, provided warm weather clothing to 42 families, operate BROCC community food shelf 5 days/week, and continue our special senior hour on Fridays. In Bennington County, we provided over \$115,000 for fuel assistance and \$46,000 for rapid resolution housing assistance and are turning 3 of those into permanent housing. We provided \$5,000 recovery funds to each of 33 small businesses including 4 startup businesses - a total of \$165,000 in grants to businesses of 5 employees or less. We’re

responsible for implementing the home weatherization services in the County and provided \$325,000 in weatherization to Bennington residents. Over \$6.6M was provided last year to assist Bennington residents in need. For more information, visit our website, www.broc.org.

ARTICLE 7. Shall the voters increase the F.Y. 2024 General Fund by the sum of \$7,000.00 for Vermont Center for Independent Living?

Charles Murphy noted that the Vermont Center for Independent Living is a disabilities and rights advocacy organization founded in 1979 with locations in Bennington, Burlington and Brattleboro. We help people with disabilities find services, problem solve, and to live independent lives. We work with the Sue Williams Freedom Fund, an equipment distribution program, the Home Access Program, Meals on Wheels, and the Vermont Communication and Distribution Program. For more information, visit our website, www.vcil.org.

ARTICLE 8. Shall the voters increase the F.Y. 2024 General Fund by the sum of \$7,500.00 for Southwestern Vermont Council on Aging, Inc.?

Ron Hache stated that our work is for seniors to be able to maintain maximum independence and quality of life. We work with Meals on Wheels and served 25,000 meals to 170 Bennington residents. Our case managers make sure that seniors have mental health benefit counseling, insurance, transportation, care giver services, etc. We also work closely with the other care giving agencies to provide all the necessary services to our aging population.

ARTICLE 9. Shall the voters increase the F.Y. 2024 General Fund by the sum of \$10,000.00 for The Tutorial Center?

Sean-Marie Oller and Matt Bentley stated that The Tutorial Center works closely with the schools and provides tutoring from grade schools to adults, to the ESL services, and to refugees coming to Vermont. We offer a pathway to a high school diploma or GED. Vermont has 33,000 people 25 years old or older that don't have a high school diploma, 33,000 that don't speak English very well, and 7,000 who don't speak English well at all. We work with the Department of Labor and Hire ability with education being necessary for these people to improve their lives.

ARTICLE 10. Shall the voters increase the F.Y. 2024 General Fund by the sum of \$11,000.00 Bennington Project Independence?

Linda Putney stated that BPI was established 45 years ago to provide respite services to older adults and younger persons with disabilities so their care givers can do what's necessary in their lives and not have to worry about their loved ones. We provide nursing care, dignified personal care, social contact, mental and physical activities, nutritious meals, art therapy, music, trips, and transportation to and from home - all of which help keep older adults out of nursing homes.

ARTICLE 11. Shall the voters increase the F.Y. 2024 General Fund by the sum of \$12,500.00 for Bennington Free Clinic?

Charlie Gingo shared that the Bennington Free Clinic has been in operation for 14 years. We serve people that have no insurance because they can't afford it or have very high deductible

insurance. We have a team of 12 volunteer doctors, 1 physician's assistant, and 9 nurses who saw 198 patients that had 300 appointments with 2/3 of them from Bennington/North Bennington. Patients are also referred to specialists as needed. We also help patients get enrolled in one of Vermont's health insurance programs and had 265 do so. This past year we have begun working with the Vermont Office of Refugee Settlement in the Ethiopian Community Health Center in Brattleboro. Our doctors did health assessment for 19 Afghani and Ukrainian refugees. We screen everyone we see for all mental health, smoking, and dental issues.

ARTICLE 12. Shall the voters increase the F.Y. 2024 General Fund by the sum of \$15,000.00 for Sunrise Family Resource Center?

Jonathan Cooper stated that the Sunrise Family Resource Center has 30 employees that have served 2,700 families with care and concern. Families on the Move has been a very successful program that provides wrap-around services to these families in need. Town funding allows our workers to be able to collaborate with several other agencies and go a little beyond their normal work responsibilities to serve Bennington residents.

ARTICLE 13. Shall the voters increase the F.Y. 2024 General Fund by the sum of \$21,600.00 for Visiting Nurse Association & Hospice of the Southwest Region?

Jessica Fredette noted that Town support enables VNA & Hospice to receive the care they deserve in the comfort of their home regardless of their financial situation. Last year we made over 120,000 visits to 3,900 patients in Bennington and Rutland counties. In Bennington County alone we saw 685 patients and completed 35,000 visits. Since the pandemic in 2020, we have had a 24% reduction in our work force and have seen significant price cuts from Medicare and Medicaid which makes the money that we receive the Town especially important.

ARTICLE 14. Shall the voters increase the F.Y. 2024 General Fund by the sum of \$25,000.00 for Bennington County Coalition for the Homeless?

Chloe Viner Collins stated that the Coalition operates 3 shelters - one for families (up to 9 families), one for individuals (up to 16 individuals), and another as of this summer for up to 9 families. We have served over 200 individuals this past year. All shelters are staffed 24/7 to help clients with job searches, interviews, cleaning, cooking and any other help they may need. We have partnered with Goodwill to help with resume building, there's a visiting nurse through GBIC's that comes in once a week, and Turning Point gives the clients any recovery resources they may need. We also offer drop in services for those in need of a shower, meal, or warmth. Most of our clients do work but cannot afford the housing in Bennington.

All that spoke on Article 3 through Article 14 thanked the Town for their support.

At 8:42 p.m., it was moved and seconded that the meeting be adjourned until tomorrow, March 7, 2023, at 7:00 a.m. when the polling places at the Bennington Fire Facility and the Village Town Office in North Bennington will be open for voting. The motion carried.

BENNINGTON TOWN MEETING ELECTION -- MARCH 7, 2023, TALLY SHEET

Pursuant to the foregoing warning, the voters of the Town of Bennington met at 7 o'clock AM and after the votes were counted, the following named persons and articles received the number of votes set opposite the names and articles designated.

SELECT BOARD (elect 2)

| | |
|----------------------|-----|
| Asher David Edelson | 301 |
| Sarah Perrin | 797 |
| Jack Rossiter-Munley | 552 |
| Donald Washum | 153 |
| Nancy White | 678 |
| Edward Woods | 835 |

And the said PERRIN and WOODS were declared elected.

ARTICLE 1:

BUDGET

| | |
|-----|-----|
| Yes | 991 |
| No | 878 |

And it was so voted.

ARTICLE 2:

South End Water Main Bond

| | |
|-----|------|
| Yes | 1095 |
| No | 762 |

And it was so voted.

ARTICLE 3:

Bennington County Assoc.

Against Child Abuse

| | |
|-----|------|
| Yes | 1319 |
| No | 544 |

And it was so voted.

ARTICLE 4:

PAVE

| | |
|-----|------|
| Yes | 1202 |
| No | 645 |

And it was so voted.

ARTICLE 5:

RSVP

| | |
|-----|------|
| Yes | 1249 |
| No | 600 |

And it was so voted.

ARTICLE 6:

BROC

| | |
|-----|------|
| Yes | 1096 |
| No | 742 |

And it was so voted.

ARTICLE 7:

VCIL

| | |
|-----|------|
| Yes | 1187 |
| No | 642 |

And it was so voted.

ARTICLE 8:

Council on Aging

| | |
|-----|------|
| Yes | 1232 |
| No | 617 |

And it was so voted.

ARTICLE 9:

Tutorial Center

| | |
|-----|------|
| Yes | 1034 |
| No | 820 |

And it was so voted.

ARTICLE 10:

BPI

| | |
|-----|------|
| Yes | 1161 |
| No | 685 |

And it was so voted.

ARTICLE 11:

Benn Free Clinic

| | |
|-----|------|
| Yes | 1232 |
| No | 628 |

And it was so voted.

ARTICLE 12:

Sunrise Fam Resource Ctr

| | |
|-----|------|
| Yes | 1026 |
| No | 809 |

And it was so voted.

ARTICLE 13:

VNA & Hospice

| | |
|-----|------|
| Yes | 1322 |
| No | 540 |

And it was so voted.

ARTICLE 14:

Coalition for Homeless

| | |
|-----|------|
| Yes | 1118 |
| No | 733 |

And it was so voted.

Recorded March 8, 2023 at 8:00 AM *Cassandra Barbeau*, Town Clerk

Notes:

-WARNING-

**TOWN OF BENNINGTON
2024 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING**

The residents of the Town of Bennington qualified by law to vote in Town Meeting are hereby notified and warned to meet in said Town on Monday, March 4, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. to transact the business specified to be done from the floor.

If you are a resident of the Town of Bennington, intend to be present at the meeting and are hearing impaired, arrangements will be made for a sign interpreter to be present at this meeting. For necessary arrangements, please contact Stuart A. Hurd, Town Manager at the Bennington Town Offices, 205 South Street, P.O. Box 469, Bennington, VT - (802) 442-1037 no later than Friday, February 16, 2024.

Following the completion of such business, the Meeting will stand adjourned to Tuesday, March 5, 2024, at The Bennington Fire Facility on River Street (Lincoln Street entrance). The Polls are open from 7:00 A.M. until 7:00 P.M. for the election of officers and voting on all ballot articles specified. Those on the checklist to vote in the Village of North Bennington shall vote for the election of officers and on all ballot articles at the North Bennington Village Office on Main Street in North Bennington. The Bennington Fire Facility above mentioned, is hereby established as the central polling place for those on the checklist to vote in said Bennington. Residents of Bennington and North Bennington may register to vote at the Town Clerk's Office, 205 South Street, Bennington, Vermont. Eligible residents registering on Election Day must do so at the polling place where they will cast their Town Meeting ballot.

BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED FROM THE "FLOOR"

Monday, March 4, 2024

7:00 P.M.

ARTICLE 1. TOWN REPORT: To hear the report of Town Officers.

ARTICLE 2. SELECT BOARD COMPENSATION: To determine what compensation shall be paid to Select Board members.

ARTICLE 3. OTHER BUSINESS: To transact such other proper business when met.

BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED BY BALLOT

TUESDAY, MARCH 5, 2024

THE POLLS TO BE OPEN FROM 7:00 A.M. TO 7:00 P.M.

AT THE POLLING PLACES SPECIFIED ABOVE

SELECT BOARD ELECTION. Two Select Board Members residing in the Town shall be elected for a term of three (3) years.

TOWN CLERK ELECTION. A Town Clerk residing in the Town shall be elected for a term of three (3) years.

ARTICLE 1. Shall the Town appropriate for the next fiscal year, July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025 the total sum of \$16,927,920.00 consisting of the following: \$5,070,990.00 for the laying out, maintaining, and repairing of the highways and bridges of the Town; and \$11,856,930.00 for the payment of the following: Any indebtedness not otherwise specifically provided for, interest on indebtedness, legally authorized State and County taxes, the prosecution and defense of the common rights and interests of the inhabitants of the Town, and for other necessary incidental expenses?

The proposed budget includes \$25,000.00 for fire equipment, \$5,000.00 for fire facilities, \$10,000.00 for parking improvements, \$15,000.00 for technology improvements, \$13,000.00 for pool maintenance, \$6,000.00 for tennis court maintenance, \$5,000.00 for public works facilities, \$428,900.00 for healthcare reserve and workers compensation insurance, \$100,000.00 for bridges and \$2,000.00 for well maintenance, any unexpended portion of which will be reserved to subsequent years for that purpose.

YES
NO

ARTICLE 2. Shall the Town of Bennington convey the .61 acres at 124 Pleasant Street (the Senior Center Building) to Benn High LLC in partial consideration for the acquisition of the real estate property at 650 Main Street (the Benn High)?

YES
NO

ARTICLE 3. Shall the voters increase the F.Y. 2025 General Fund by the sum of \$5,000.00 for Bennington County Association Against Child Abuse?

YES
NO

ARTICLE 4. Shall the voters increase the F.Y. 2025 General Fund by the sum of \$5,000.00 for Project Against Violent Encounters?

YES
NO

ARTICLE 5. Shall the voters increase the F.Y. 2025 General Fund by the sum of \$5,500.00 for Green Mountain Retired and Senior Volunteer Program?

YES
NO

ARTICLE 6. Shall the voters increase the F.Y. 2025 General Fund by the sum of \$6,750.00 for BROCC - Community Action In Southwestern Vermont?

YES

NO

ARTICLE 7. Shall the voters increase the F.Y. 2025 General Fund by the sum of \$7,500.00 for Southwestern Vermont Council on Aging, Inc.?

YES

NO

ARTICLE 8. Shall the voters increase the F.Y. 2025 General Fund by the sum of \$10,000.00 for The Tutorial Center?

YES

NO

ARTICLE 9. Shall the voters increase the F.Y. 2025 General Fund by the sum of \$11,000.00 for Bennington Project Independence?

YES

NO

ARTICLE 10. Shall the voters increase the F.Y. 2025 General Fund by the sum of \$12,500.00 for Bennington Free Clinic?

YES

NO

ARTICLE 11. Shall the voters increase the F.Y. 2025 General Fund by the sum of \$15,000.00 for Sunrise Family Resource Center?

YES

NO

ARTICLE 12. Shall the voters increase the F.Y. 2025 General Fund by the sum of \$21,600.00 for VNA & Hospice of the Southwest Region?

YES

NO

ARTICLE 13. Shall the voters increase the F.Y. 2025 General Fund by the sum of \$25,000.00 for Bennington County Coalition for the Homeless?

YES

NO

Municipal Budget

Town of Bennington Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Proposal

| DEPARTMENT DESCRIPTION | BUDGET FY2023 | ACTUAL FY2023 | BUDGET FY2024 | ACTUAL FY24 PRD6 | PROPOSED FY2025 | FY24 vs FY25 % INC/(DEC) |
|---------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| SELECT BOARD | 21,550 | 21,033 | 21,650 | 11,781 | 22,050 | 1.85% |
| TOWN MANAGER | 259,390 | 263,915 | 284,580 | 133,011 | 299,330 | 5.18% |
| INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY | 0 | 31,064 | 82,690 | 70,431 | 287,080 | 0.00% |
| TREASURER | 18,330 | 17,540 | 19,750 | 9,018 | 19,140 | -3.09% |
| ACCOUNTING | 304,250 | 301,992 | 337,350 | 168,172 | 352,830 | 4.59% |
| LISTING | 169,620 | 167,052 | 183,610 | 93,310 | 198,300 | 8.00% |
| COLLECTIONS | 168,610 | 174,652 | 185,490 | 92,577 | 206,660 | 11.41% |
| TOWN CLERK | 207,180 | 200,910 | 220,460 | 100,057 | 242,040 | 9.79% |
| PERMIT-PLAN-CODE ENFORCE | 295,400 | 326,053 | 326,310 | 162,758 | 335,070 | 2.68% |
| COMM DEVELOPMENT | 319,950 | 285,485 | 350,010 | 174,449 | 366,580 | 4.73% |
| ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES | 954,600 | 949,543 | 986,720 | 704,403 | 989,600 | 0.29% |
| BUILDINGS & GROUNDS | 916,340 | 984,765 | 1,003,270 | 509,907 | 1,064,030 | 6.06% |
| FLOOD CONTROL | 6,800 | 1,532 | 4,100 | 248 | 4,000 | -2.44% |
| POLICE | 4,268,100 | 3,945,110 | 4,639,960 | 2,158,216 | 4,973,830 | 7.20% |
| SOLID WASTE MGMT | 228,150 | 204,757 | 190,000 | 65,812 | 197,000 | 3.68% |
| CEMETARY | 33,000 | 55,971 | 33,000 | 19,419 | 33,000 | 0.00% |
| HEALTH OFFICER | 7,950 | 7,728 | 8,070 | 3,866 | 7,750 | -3.97% |
| PARKS & RECREATION | 654,060 | 1,789,353 | 676,300 | 605,220 | 632,440 | -6.49% |
| GRANTS & SUBSIDIES | 789,130 | 920,980 | 824,390 | 956,240 | 866,330 | 5.09% |
| HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS | 31,600 | 30,185 | 31,600 | 34,757 | 31,600 | 0.00% |
| OTHER IMPROVEMENTS | 33,500 | 35,887 | 33,500 | 8,553 | 33,500 | 0.00% |
| MISC CONTINGENCIES | 33,000 | 21,797 | 33,000 | 0 | 30,000 | -9.09% |
| DEBT-IRENE BOND | 145,200 | 145,121 | 151,000 | 101,847 | 146,910 | -2.71% |
| COUNTY TAX PAYMENTS | 90,000 | 93,608 | 93,610 | 95,504 | 95,510 | 2.03% |
| RESERVE FUND EXPENDITURES | 0 | 756,442 | 0 | 250,648 | 0 | 0.00% |
| HIGHWAY FUND | 3,762,830 | 4,190,076 | 4,243,840 | 2,127,375 | 4,383,640 | 3.29% |
| DEBT-HIGHWAY FUND | 573,190 | 509,481 | 609,500 | 428,097 | 687,350 | 12.77% |
| FIRE FUND | 353,710 | 1,406,997 | 356,480 | 142,992 | 344,860 | -3.26% |
| DEBT-FIRE FUND | 73,490 | 73,493 | 73,220 | 59,796 | 72,890 | -0.45% |
| PARKING FUND | 0 | 126,780 | 20,000 | 1,513 | 4,600 | -77.00% |
| Expenditures Subtotal | 13,927,050 | 17,311,207 | 15,189,740 | 8,700,236 | 16,020,770 | 5.47% |
| Debt Management Subtotal | 791,880 | 728,095 | 833,720 | 589,740 | 907,150 | 8.81% |
| TOTAL EXPENDITURES | 14,718,930 | 18,039,302 | 16,023,460 | 9,289,976 | 16,927,920 | 5.64% |

APPENDIX

RHR Smith & Company, CPAs, Buxton, Maine conducted an audit of the financial statements for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2023. They performed their audit in accordance with the auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. The following independent auditor's report, management's discussion and analysis and schedules have been excerpted from the 2023 financial audit. The full audit is available at https://benningtonvt.org/services/finance/annual_reports_budgets.php



January 2, 2024

Selectboard
Town of Bennington, Vermont
Bennington, Vermont

We were engaged by the Town of Bennington, Vermont and have audited the financial statements of the Town of Bennington, Vermont as of and for the year ended June 30, 2023. The following schedules have been excerpted from the 2023 financial statements, a complete copy of which, including our opinion thereon, will be available for inspection at the Town. Included herein are:

Independent Auditor's Report

Management's Discussion and Analysis

Balance Sheet - Governmental Funds Statement C

Statement of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund
Balances - Governmental Funds Statement E

Statement of Net Position - Proprietary Funds Statement G

Statement of Revenues, Expenses and Changes in Net Position -
Proprietary Funds Statement H

Budgetary Comparison Schedule - Budgetary Basis - Budget
and Actual - General Fund Schedule 1

Budgetary Comparison Schedule - Budgetary Basis - Budget
and Actual - General Fund Revenues Schedule A

Schedule of Departmental Operations - General Fund Schedule B

RHR Smith & Company

Certified Public Accountants

3 Old Orchard Road, Buxton, Maine 04093
Tel: (800) 300-7708 (207) 929-4606 Fax: (207) 929-4609
www.rhrsmith.com



Proven Expertise & Integrity

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

Selectboard
Town of Bennington
Bennington, Vermont

Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements

Opinions

We have audited the financial statements of the governmental activities, business-type activities, each major fund and the aggregate remaining fund information of the Town of Bennington, Vermont, as of and for the year ended June 30, 2023 and the related notes to the financial statements, which collectively comprise the Town's basic financial statements as listed in the table of contents.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the respective financial position of the governmental activities, business-type activities, each major fund and the aggregate remaining fund information of the Town of Bennington, Vermont as of June 30, 2023 and the respective changes in financial position and, where applicable, cash flows thereof for the year then ended, in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Basis for Opinions

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAS) and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are required to be independent of the Town of Bennington, Vermont and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audit. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinions.

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Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America and for the design, implementation and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is required to evaluate whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Town of Bennington, Vermont's ability to continue as a going concern for twelve months beyond the financial statement date, including any currently known information that may raise substantial doubt shortly thereafter.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinions. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with GAAS and *Government Auditing Standards* will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations or the override of internal control. Misstatements are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user based on the financial statements.

In performing an audit in accordance with GAAS and *Government Auditing Standards*, we:

- exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- identify and assess the risks of material misstatements of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements.
- obtain an understanding of internal controls relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Town of Bennington, Vermont's internal control. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.

- evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements.
- conclude whether, in our judgment, there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise doubt about the Town of Bennington, Vermont's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit, significant audit findings and certain internal control-related matters that we identified during the audit.

Required Supplementary Information

Accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America require that the management's discussion and analysis, budgetary comparison information and pension and OPEB information on pages 5 through 11 and 67 through 73 be presented to supplement the basic financial statements. Such information, although not a part of the basic financial statements, is required by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board, who considers it to be an essential part of financial reporting for placing the basic financial statements in an appropriate operational, economic or historical context. We have applied certain limited procedures to the required supplementary information in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America, which consisted of inquiries of management about the methods of preparing the information and comparing the information for consistency with management's responses to our inquiries, the basic financial statements and other knowledge we obtained during our audit of the basic financial statements. We do not express an opinion or provide any assurance on the information because the limited procedures do not provide us with sufficient evidence to express an opinion or provide any assurance.

Supplementary Information

Our audit was conducted for the purpose of forming opinions on the financial statements that collectively comprise the Town of Bennington, Vermont's basic financial statements. The Budgetary Comparison Schedule - Budgetary Basis - Budget to Actual - General Fund Revenues and Schedule of Departmental Operations - General Fund are presented for purposes of additional analysis and are not a required part of the basic financial statements. The Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards is presented for purposes of additional analysis as required by Title 2 U.S. *Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 200, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards* and is also not a required part of the basic financial statements.

Such information is the responsibility of management and was derived from and relates directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the basic financial statements. The information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the basic financial statements and certain additional procedures, including comparing and reconciling such information directly to the underlying accounting and other

records used to prepare the basic financial statements or to the basic financial statements themselves and other additional procedures in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. In our opinion, the Budgetary Comparison Schedule - Budgetary Basis - Budget to Actual - General Fund Revenues, Schedule of Departmental Operations - General Fund and Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards are fairly stated, in all material respects, in relation to the basic financial statements as a whole.

Other Reporting Required by *Government Auditing Standards*

In accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, we have also issued our report dated January 2, 2024, on our consideration of the Town of Bennington, Vermont's internal control over financial reporting and on our tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts and grants agreements and other matters. The purpose of that report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control over financial reporting and compliance and the results of that testing and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of the Town of Bennington Vermont's internal control over financial reporting or on compliance. That report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* in considering the Town of Bennington, Vermont's internal control over financial reporting and compliance.

RHR Smith & Company

Buxton, Maine
Vermont Registration No. 092.0000697
January 2, 2024

**REQUIRED SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION
MANAGEMENT'S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS
JUNE 30, 2023**

(UNAUDITED)

The following management's discussion and analysis of the Town of Bennington, Vermont's financial performance provides an overview of the Town's financial activities for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2023. Please read it in conjunction with the Town of Bennington, Vermont's financial statements.

Financial Statement Overview

The Town of Bennington, Vermont's basic financial statements include the following components: 1) government-wide financial statements, 2) fund financial statements and 3) notes to the financial statements. This report also includes required supplementary information which consists of the general fund budgetary comparison schedules, pension and OPEB schedules and other supplementary information which includes other schedules.

Basic Financial Statements

The basic financial statements include financial information in two differing views: the government-wide financial statements and the fund financial statements. These basic financial statements also include the notes to financial statements that explain in more detail certain information in the financial statements and also provide the user with the accounting policies used in the preparation of the financial statements.

Government-Wide Financial Statements

The government-wide financial statements provide a broad view of the Town's operations in a manner that is similar to private businesses. These statements provide both short-term as well as long-term information in regards to the Town's financial position. These financial statements are prepared using the accrual basis of accounting. This measurement focus takes into account all revenues and expenses associated with the fiscal year regardless of when cash is received or paid. The government-wide financial statements include the following two statements:

The Statement of Net Position - this statement presents *all* of the government's assets, deferred outflows of resources, liabilities and deferred inflows of resources with the difference being reported as net position.

The Statement of Activities - this statement presents information that shows how the government's net position changed during the period. All changes in net position are reported as soon as the underlying event giving rise to the change occurs, regardless of the timing of the related cash flows.

Both of the above mentioned financial statements have separate columns for the two different types of Town activities. The types of activities presented for the Town of Bennington are:

- *Governmental activities* - The activities in this section are mostly supported by taxes and intergovernmental revenues (federal and state grants). Most of the Town's basic services are reported in governmental activities, which include general government, public safety, public works, health and welfare, recreation, highways and roads and parking.
- *Business-type activities* - These activities are normally intended to recover all or a significant portion of their costs through user fees and/or charges to external users for goods and/or services. These activities for the Town of Bennington include the water and sewer funds.

Fund Financial Statements

A fund is a grouping of related accounts that is used to maintain control over resources that have been segregated for specific activities or objectives. The Town of Bennington, like other local governments uses fund accounting to ensure and demonstrate compliance with financial related legal requirements. All of the funds of the Town of Bennington can be divided into two categories: governmental funds and proprietary funds.

Governmental funds: Most of the basic services provided by the Town are financed through governmental funds. Governmental funds are used to account for essentially the same functions reported in governmental activities in the government-wide financial statements. However, unlike the government-wide financial statements, the governmental fund financial statements focus on near-term inflows and outflows of spendable resources. They also focus on the balance of spendable resources available at the end of the fiscal year. Such information will be useful in evaluating the government's near-term financing requirements. This approach is known as the current financial resources measurement focus and the modified accrual basis of accounting. Under this approach, revenues are recorded when cash is received or when susceptible to accrual. Expenditures are recorded when liabilities are incurred and due. These statements provide a detailed short-term view of the Town's finances to assist in determining whether there will be adequate financial resources available to meet the current needs of the Town.

Because the focus of governmental funds is narrower than that of government-wide financial statements, it is useful to compare the information presented for governmental funds with similar information presented for governmental activities in the government-wide financial statements. By doing so, readers may better understand the long-term impact of the government's near-term financing decisions. Both the governmental funds balance sheet and the governmental funds statement of revenues, expenditures and changes in fund balances provide a reconciliation to facilitate this comparison between governmental funds and governmental activities. These reconciliations are presented on the page immediately following each governmental fund financial statement.

The Town of Bennington presents three columns in the governmental funds balance sheet and the governmental funds statement of revenues, expenditures and changes in fund balances. The Town's major governmental funds are the general fund, the Community Development Fund and the Downtown Improvement Commission. The Town does not have any nonmajor funds.

The general fund is the only funds for which the Town legally adopted a budget. The Budgetary Comparison Schedule - Budgetary Basis - Budget and Actual - General Fund provides a comparison of the original and final budget and the actual expenditures for the current year.

Proprietary Funds: The Town of Bennington maintains two proprietary funds, the water and sewer funds. These funds are used to show activities that operate more like those of commercial enterprises. Proprietary funds provide the same type of information as the government-wide financial statements, only in more detail. Like the government-wide financial statements, proprietary fund financial statements use the accrual basis of accounting. No reconciliation is needed between the government-wide financial statements for business-type activities and the proprietary fund financial statements.

Notes to the Financial Statements

The notes provide additional information that is essential to a full understanding of the data provided in the Government-Wide and the Fund Financial Statements. The Notes to Financial Statements can be found following the Statement of Cash Flows - Proprietary Funds.

Required Supplementary Information

The basic financial statements are followed by a section of required supplementary information, which includes a Budgetary Comparison Schedule - Budgetary Basis - Budget and Actual - General Fund, Schedule of Proportionate Share of the Net Pension Liability, Schedule of Contributions - Pension, Schedule of Changes in Net OPEB Liability, Schedule of Changes in Net OPEB Liability and Related Ratios, Schedule of Contributions - OPEB and Notes to Required Supplementary Information.

Other Supplementary Information

Other supplementary information follows the required supplementary information. These other schedules provide information in regards to detailed budgetary information for the general fund.

Government-Wide Financial Analysis

Our analysis below focuses on the net position and changes in net position of the Town's governmental activities. The Town's total net position for governmental activities increased by \$1,567,370 from \$12,967,897 to \$14,535,267. For the business-type activities, the Town's total net position by \$1,748,603 from \$29,822,867 to \$31,571,470.

Unrestricted net position - the part of net position that can be used to finance day-to-day operations without constraints established by debt covenants, enabling legislation or other legal requirements - for the governmental activities by \$429,313 to a balance of \$357,255 at the end of the fiscal year. This is a substantial improvement from 2022 and should continue to improve as debt is reduced. For the business-type activities, the unrestricted net position by \$642,463 to a balance of \$9,932,805.

Table 1
Town of Bennington, Vermont
Net Position
June 30,

| | Governmental Activities | | Business-Type Activities | |
|---|-------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| | 2023 | 2022 (Restated) | 2023 | 2022 (Restated) |
| Assets: | | | | |
| Current Assets | \$ 11,995,093 | \$ 10,061,592 | \$ 10,669,444 | \$ 10,175,413 |
| Noncurrent Assets - Capital Assets | 18,224,690 | 18,231,480 | 35,567,458 | 35,147,115 |
| Noncurrent Assets - Other Assets | 316,382 | - | - | - |
| Total Assets | 30,536,165 | 28,293,072 | 46,236,902 | 45,322,528 |
| Deferred Outflows of Resources: | | | | |
| Deferred Outflows Related to Pensions | 1,545,885 | 1,048,393 | 259,024 | 175,665 |
| Deferred Outflows Related to OPEB | 128,387 | 122,041 | 5,988 | 5,692 |
| Total Deferred Outflows of Resources | 1,674,272 | 1,170,434 | 265,012 | 181,357 |
| Liabilities: | | | | |
| Current Liabilities | 2,526,090 | 1,890,690 | 1,236,716 | 1,382,199 |
| Noncurrent Liabilities | 14,259,075 | 12,989,566 | 13,648,184 | 14,058,122 |
| Total Liabilities | 16,785,165 | 14,880,256 | 14,884,900 | 15,440,321 |
| Deferred Inflows of Resources: | | | | |
| Deferred Revenue Related to Leases | 355,954 | - | - | - |
| Deferred Inflows Related to Pensions | 170,663 | 1,367,535 | 28,596 | 229,139 |
| Deferred Inflows Related to OPEB | 363,388 | 247,818 | 16,948 | 11,558 |
| Total Deferred Inflows of Resources | 890,005 | 1,615,353 | 45,544 | 240,697 |
| Net Position: | | | | |
| Net Investment in Capital Assets | 7,993,250 | 8,688,580 | 21,638,665 | 20,532,525 |
| Restricted | 6,184,762 | 4,351,375 | - | - |
| Unrestricted (Deficit) | 357,255 | (72,058) | 9,932,805 | 9,290,342 |
| Total Net Position | \$ 14,535,267 | \$ 12,967,897 | \$31,571,470 | \$ 29,822,867 |

Revenues and Expenses

Revenues for the Town's governmental activities decreased by 0.87%, while total expenses increased by 2.05%. The largest decrease in revenues was in grants and contributions not restricted to specific programs. The biggest increases in expenses were in public works, recreation and unclassified. For the business-type activities, revenues increased by 3.50% while total expenses increased by 10.74%.

Table 2
Town of Bennington, Vermont
Change in Net Position
For the Years Ended June 30,

| | <u>Governmental Activities</u> | | <u>Business-Type Activities</u> | |
|--|--------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| | <u>2023</u> | <u>2022</u> | <u>2023</u> | <u>2022</u> |
| Revenues | | | | |
| <i>Program Revenues:</i> | | | | |
| Charges for services | \$ 417,040 | \$ 544,200 | \$ 6,637,261 | \$ 7,069,262 |
| Operating grants and contributions | 809,173 | 4,237,475 | - | - |
| Capital grants and contributions | - | 410,225 | 2,529,958 | 1,963,138 |
| <i>General Revenues:</i> | | | | |
| Taxes | 13,080,210 | 12,561,467 | - | - |
| Grants and contributions not restricted to specific programs | 4,101,516 | 563,524 | - | - |
| Investment income | 120,059 | 28,029 | 89,647 | 36,306 |
| Miscellaneous | 427,175 | 776,168 | 129,493 | - |
| Total Revenues | <u>18,955,173</u> | <u>19,121,088</u> | <u>9,386,359</u> | <u>9,068,706</u> |
| Expenses | | | | |
| General government | 4,274,280 | 4,559,532 | - | - |
| Public safety | 4,034,947 | 4,189,512 | - | - |
| Public works | 1,011,666 | 202,713 | - | - |
| Health and welfare | 7,728 | 7,733 | - | - |
| Recreation | 1,805,174 | 1,546,608 | - | - |
| Highways and roads | 4,192,792 | 4,822,103 | - | - |
| Parking | 126,780 | 19,340 | - | - |
| Agencies | 920,980 | 910,029 | - | - |
| Unclassified | 951,023 | 778,488 | - | - |
| Water | - | - | 4,902,374 | 4,306,708 |
| Sewer | - | - | 2,566,582 | 2,437,753 |
| Debt service - interest | 145,146 | 167,574 | - | - |
| Capital outlay | 86,087 | - | - | - |
| Total Expenses | <u>17,556,603</u> | <u>17,203,632</u> | <u>7,468,956</u> | <u>6,744,461</u> |
| Transfers | <u>168,800</u> | <u>618,517</u> | <u>(168,800)</u> | <u>(618,517)</u> |
| Change in Net Position | 1,567,370 | 2,535,973 | 1,748,603 | 1,705,728 |
| Net Position - July 1, Restated | <u>12,967,897</u> | <u>10,431,924</u> | <u>29,822,867</u> | <u>28,117,139</u> |
| Net Position - June 30 | <u>\$ 14,535,267</u> | <u>\$ 12,967,897</u> | <u>\$31,571,470</u> | <u>\$ 29,822,867</u> |

Financial Analysis of the Town's Fund Statements

Governmental funds: The financial reporting focus of the Town's governmental funds is to provide information on near-term inflows, outflows and balances of spendable resources. Such information may be useful in assessing the Town's financial requirements. In particular, unassigned fund balance may serve as a useful measure of a government's financial position at the end of the year and the net resources available for spending.

Table 3
Town of Bennington, Vermont
Fund Balances - Governmental Funds
June 30,

| | <u>2023</u> | <u>2022</u> | <u>Increase/ (Decrease)</u> |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| General Fund: | | | |
| Nonspendable | \$ 116,476 | \$ 93,299 | \$ 23,177 |
| Restricted | 2,849,251 | 1,486,834 | 1,362,417 |
| Committed | 2,428,654 | 3,639,556 | (1,210,902) |
| Assigned | 465,240 | 15,184 | 450,056 |
| Unassigned | 934,882 | 527,782 | 407,100 |
| Total General Fund | <u>\$ 6,794,503</u> | <u>\$ 5,762,655</u> | <u>\$ 1,031,848</u> |
| Community Development Fund | | | |
| Nonspendable | \$ 4,086,205 | \$ 3,593,885 | \$ 492,320 |
| Unassigned | (750,694) | (729,344) | (21,350) |
| Total Community Development Fund | <u>\$ 3,335,511</u> | <u>\$ 2,864,541</u> | <u>\$ 470,970</u> |
| Downtown Improvement Commission | | | |
| Committed | \$ 21,190 | \$ 21,190 | \$ - |
| Total Downtown Improvement Commission | <u>\$ 21,190</u> | <u>\$ 21,190</u> | <u>\$ -</u> |

The changes to total fund balances in each of the major funds occurred due to the regular activity of operations.

Proprietary funds: The Town's proprietary funds provide the same type of information found in the government-wide financial statements, but in more detail.

The water fund's net position increased by \$1,229,795 from the prior fiscal year, mainly due to capital contributions while the sewer fund's net position increased by \$518,808 over the prior fiscal year mainly due to operating revenues exceeding operating expenses.

Budgetary Highlights

The only difference between the original and final budget for the general fund was the use of restricted fund balances.

The general fund actual revenues were over budgeted amounts by \$4,220,370. This was the result of all revenue categories but primarily unbudgeted grants, being received in excess of budgeted amounts with the exception of permits, licenses and fees.

The general fund actual expenditures were under budget by \$344,596. All expenditure categories were under budget with the exception of public works, recreation, highways and roads, parking and capital outlay.

Capital Asset and Debt Administration

Capital Assets

As of June 30, 2023, the net book value of capital assets recorded by the Town increased by \$413,553 over the prior year. The increase is the result of capital additions of \$5,715,095 less current year disposals of \$879,036 and depreciation of \$4,422,506. Refer to Note 5 of the Notes to Financial Statements for detailed information.

Table 4
Town of Bennington, Vermont
Capital Assets (Net of Depreciation)
June 30,

| | <u>2023</u> | <u>2022</u> <u>(Restated)</u> |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|
| Land and improvements | \$ 1,590,909 | \$ 1,668,489 |
| Construction in progress | 1,164,366 | 1,432,665 |
| Buildings and improvements | 8,703,735 | 9,157,730 |
| Machinery, equipment and vehicles | 5,359,318 | 4,382,708 |
| Infrastructure | 36,913,642 | 36,616,647 |
| Right of use assets | 60,178 | 120,356 |
| Total | <u>\$53,792,148</u> | <u>\$53,378,595</u> |

Debt

At June 30, 2023, the Town had \$24,160,233 in bonds, notes from direct borrowings payable and a lease liability outstanding versus \$25,556,459 last year, a decrease of 5.46%. Refer to Note 7 of the Notes to Financial Statements for detailed information.

Economic Factors and Next Year's Budgets and Rates

The Town has steadily maintained a sufficient unassigned fund balance to sustain government operations for a period of approximately one month, while also maintaining reserve accounts for capital and program needs.

The 2023 - 2024 budget could be severely impacted by the reduction of funding from the State. There is no indication of reduced funding from the State for 2023 - 2024 as of the date this report was issued.

Contacting the Town's Financial Management

This financial report is designed to provide our citizens, taxpayers, customers and investors and creditors with a general overview of the Town's finances and to show the Town's accountability for the money it receives. If you have questions about this report or need additional financial information, contact the Town Manager, Town of Bennington, P.O. Box 469, Bennington, Vermont 05201.

TOWN OF BENNINGTON, VERMONT

BALANCE SHEET - GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS
JUNE 30, 2023

| | General Fund | Community Development Fund | Downtown Improvement Commission | Total Governmental Funds |
|---|----------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ASSETS | | | | |
| Cash and cash equivalents | \$ 10,402,211 | \$ 614,483 | \$ - | \$ 11,016,694 |
| Investments | 2,994,997 | - | - | 2,994,997 |
| Accounts receivable (net of allowance for uncollectibles): | | | | |
| Taxes receivable | 1,406,329 | - | - | 1,406,329 |
| Loans receivable | - | 4,086,205 | - | 4,086,205 |
| Other | 358,600 | - | - | 358,600 |
| Prepaid items | 116,476 | - | - | 116,476 |
| Due from other funds | 1,365,177 | - | 21,190 | 1,386,367 |
| TOTAL ASSETS | <u>\$ 16,643,790</u> | <u>\$ 4,700,688</u> | <u>\$ 21,190</u> | <u>\$ 21,365,668</u> |
| LIABILITIES | | | | |
| Accounts payable | \$ 892,665 | \$ - | \$ - | \$ 892,665 |
| Other liabilities | 229,764 | - | - | 229,764 |
| Unearned revenue | 368,746 | - | - | 368,746 |
| Due to other funds | 8,044,970 | 1,365,177 | - | 9,410,147 |
| TOTAL LIABILITIES | <u>9,536,145</u> | <u>1,365,177</u> | <u>-</u> | <u>10,901,322</u> |
| DEFERRED INFLOWS OF RESOURCES | | | | |
| Deferred tax revenues | 313,142 | - | - | 313,142 |
| TOTAL DEFERRED INFLOWS OF RESOURCES | <u>313,142</u> | <u>-</u> | <u>-</u> | <u>313,142</u> |
| FUND BALANCES | | | | |
| Nonspendable | 116,476 | 4,086,205 | - | 4,202,681 |
| Restricted | 2,849,251 | - | - | 2,849,251 |
| Committed | 1,248,032 | - | 21,190 | 1,269,222 |
| Assigned | 1,645,862 | - | - | 1,645,862 |
| Unassigned | 934,882 | (750,694) | - | 184,188 |
| TOTAL FUND BALANCES | <u>6,794,503</u> | <u>3,335,511</u> | <u>21,190</u> | <u>10,151,204</u> |
| TOTAL LIABILITIES, DEFERRED INFLOWS OF RESOURCES AND FUND BALANCES | <u>\$ 16,643,790</u> | <u>\$ 4,700,688</u> | <u>\$ 21,190</u> | <u>\$ 21,365,668</u> |

See accompanying independent auditor's report and notes to financial statements.

TOWN OF BENNINGTON, VERMONT

STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES
GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2023

| | General Fund | Community Development Fund | Downtown Improvement Commission | Total Governmental Funds |
|--|---------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| REVENUES | | | | |
| Taxes | \$ 12,994,488 | \$ - | \$ 90,379 | \$ 13,084,867 |
| Intergovernmental | 4,370,689 | 540,000 | - | 4,910,689 |
| Permits, licenses and fees | 417,040 | - | - | 417,040 |
| Loan interest | - | 12,518 | - | 12,518 |
| Miscellaneous revenues | 680,603 | 6,447 | - | 687,050 |
| TOTAL REVENUES | 18,462,820 | 558,965 | 90,379 | 19,112,164 |
| EXPENDITURES | | | | |
| Current: | | | | |
| General government | 3,728,406 | - | - | 3,728,406 |
| Public safety | 5,352,111 | - | - | 5,352,111 |
| Public works | 260,729 | - | - | 260,729 |
| Health and welfare | 7,728 | - | - | 7,728 |
| Recreation | 1,789,348 | - | - | 1,789,348 |
| Highways and roads | 4,131,630 | - | - | 4,131,630 |
| Parking | 126,780 | - | - | 126,780 |
| Agencies | 920,980 | - | - | 920,980 |
| Other | 820,649 | 39,995 | 90,379 | 951,023 |
| Debt service: | | | | |
| Principal | 582,949 | - | - | 582,949 |
| Interest | 145,146 | - | - | 145,146 |
| Capital outlay | 128,646 | - | - | 128,646 |
| TOTAL EXPENDITURES | 17,995,102 | 39,995 | 90,379 | 18,125,476 |
| EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUES OVER (UNDER) EXPENDITURES | 467,718 | 518,970 | - | 986,688 |
| OTHER FINANCING SOURCES (USES) | | | | |
| Bond and note proceeds | 347,330 | - | - | 347,330 |
| Transfers in | 261,000 | - | - | 261,000 |
| Transfers (out) | (44,200) | (48,000) | - | (92,200) |
| TOTAL OTHER FINANCING SOURCES (USES) | 564,130 | (48,000) | - | 516,130 |
| NET CHANGE IN FUND BALANCES | 1,031,848 | 470,970 | - | 1,502,818 |
| FUND BALANCES - JULY 1 | 5,762,655 | 2,864,541 | 21,190 | 8,648,386 |
| FUND BALANCES - JUNE 30 | \$ 6,794,503 | \$ 3,335,511 | \$ 21,190 | \$ 10,151,204 |

See accompanying independent auditor's report and notes to financial statements.

TOWN OF BENNINGTON, VERMONT

STATEMENT OF NET POSITION - PROPRIETARY FUNDS
JUNE 30, 2023

| | Enterprise Funds | | |
|--|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| | Water Fund | Sewer Fund | Total |
| ASSETS | | | |
| Current assets: | | | |
| Accounts receivable (net of allowance for uncollectibles) | \$ 1,985,042 | \$ 636,629 | \$ 2,621,671 |
| Prepaid items | 10,437 | 13,556 | 23,993 |
| Due from other funds | 5,619,103 | 2,404,677 | 8,023,780 |
| Total current assets | <u>7,614,582</u> | <u>3,054,862</u> | <u>10,669,444</u> |
| Capital assets: | | | |
| Land, infrastructure and other assets not being depreciated | 511,960 | 197 | 512,157 |
| Land improvements, buildings and improvements, equipment, vehicles and infrastructure net of accumulated depreciation | 33,830,174 | 32,087,004 | 65,917,178 |
| Total capital assets | <u>34,342,134</u> | <u>32,087,201</u> | <u>66,429,335</u> |
| Less: accumulated depreciation | <u>(11,075,589)</u> | <u>(19,786,288)</u> | <u>(30,861,877)</u> |
| Net capital assets | <u>23,266,545</u> | <u>12,300,913</u> | <u>35,567,458</u> |
| TOTAL ASSETS | <u>30,881,127</u> | <u>15,355,775</u> | <u>46,236,902</u> |
| DEFERRED OUTFLOWS OF RESOURCES | | | |
| Deferred outflows related to pensions | 114,415 | 144,609 | 259,024 |
| Deferred outflows related to OPEB | 2,710 | 3,278 | 5,988 |
| TOTAL DEFERRED OUTFLOWS OF RESOURCES | <u>117,125</u> | <u>147,887</u> | <u>265,012</u> |
| TOTAL ASSETS AND DEFERRED OUTFLOWS OF RESOURCES | <u>\$ 30,998,252</u> | <u>\$15,503,662</u> | <u>\$ 46,501,914</u> |

STATEMENT G (CONTINUED)

TOWN OF BENNINGTON, VERMONT

STATEMENT OF NET POSITION - PROPRIETARY FUNDS
JUNE 30, 2023

| | Enterprise Funds | | |
|--|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| | Water Fund | Sewer Fund | Total |
| LIABILITIES | | | |
| Current liabilities: | | | |
| Accounts payable | \$ 59,925 | \$ 100,244 | \$ 160,169 |
| Accrued expenses | 16,034 | 59,883 | 75,917 |
| Current portion of long-term liabilities | 540,986 | 459,644 | 1,000,630 |
| Total current liabilities | <u>616,945</u> | <u>619,771</u> | <u>1,236,716</u> |
| Noncurrent liabilities: | | | |
| Noncurrent portion of long-term obligations: | | | |
| Notes from direct borrowings payable | 4,613,789 | 8,314,374 | 12,928,163 |
| Net pension liability | 303,610 | 383,735 | 687,345 |
| Net OPEB liability | 14,788 | 17,888 | 32,676 |
| Total noncurrent liabilities | <u>4,932,187</u> | <u>8,715,997</u> | <u>13,648,184</u> |
| TOTAL LIABILITIES | <u>5,549,132</u> | <u>9,335,768</u> | <u>14,884,900</u> |
| DEFERRED INFLOWS OF RESOURCES | | | |
| Deferred outflows related to pensions | 12,631 | 15,965 | 28,596 |
| Deferred outflows related to OPEB | 7,670 | 9,278 | 16,948 |
| TOTAL DEFERRED INFLOWS OF RESOURCES | <u>20,301</u> | <u>25,243</u> | <u>45,544</u> |
| NET POSITION | | | |
| Net investment in capital assets | 18,111,770 | 3,526,895 | 21,638,665 |
| Unrestricted | 7,317,049 | 2,615,756 | 9,932,805 |
| TOTAL NET POSITION | <u>25,428,819</u> | <u>6,142,651</u> | <u>31,571,470</u> |
| TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET POSITION | <u>\$ 30,998,252</u> | <u>\$15,503,662</u> | <u>\$ 46,501,914</u> |

See accompanying independent auditor's report and notes to financial statements.

TOWN OF BENNINGTON, VERMONT

STATEMENT REVENUES, EXPENSES AND CHANGES IN NET POSITION
 PROPRIETARY FUNDS
 FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2023

| | Enterprise Funds | | |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| | Water Fund | Sewer Fund | Total |
| OPERATING REVENUES | | | |
| Charges for services | \$ 3,554,129 | \$ 3,083,132 | \$ 6,637,261 |
| Other | 24,457 | 39,621 | 64,078 |
| TOTAL OPERATING REVENUES | <u>3,578,586</u> | <u>3,122,753</u> | <u>6,701,339</u> |
| OPERATING EXPENSES | | | |
| Wages and benefits | 618,482 | 852,730 | 1,471,212 |
| Office expenses | 22,238 | 17,710 | 39,948 |
| Insurance | 55,007 | 79,291 | 134,298 |
| Utilities | 166,769 | 234,464 | 401,233 |
| Supplies | 205,263 | 225,796 | 431,059 |
| Professional services | 15,874 | 108,204 | 124,078 |
| Repairs and maintenance | 2,652,108 | 61,012 | 2,713,120 |
| Other | 125,281 | 14,135 | 139,416 |
| Depreciation | 887,951 | 773,199 | 1,661,150 |
| TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES | <u>4,748,973</u> | <u>2,366,541</u> | <u>7,115,514</u> |
| OPERATING INCOME | <u>(1,170,387)</u> | <u>756,212</u> | <u>(414,175)</u> |
| NONOPERATING REVENUES (EXPENSES) | | | |
| Capital contributions | 2,529,958 | - | 2,529,958 |
| Sales of fixed assets | 65,415 | - | 65,415 |
| Transfers in | - | 31,200 | 31,200 |
| Transfers (out) | (100,500) | (99,500) | (200,000) |
| Interest income | 58,710 | 30,937 | 89,647 |
| Interest (expense) | (153,401) | (200,041) | (353,442) |
| TOTAL NONOPERATING REVENUES (EXPENSES) | <u>2,400,182</u> | <u>(237,404)</u> | <u>2,162,778</u> |
| CHANGE IN NET POSITION | 1,229,795 | 518,808 | 1,748,603 |
| NET POSITION - JULY 1, RESTATED | <u>24,199,024</u> | <u>5,623,843</u> | <u>29,822,867</u> |
| NET POSITION - JUNE 30 | <u>\$25,428,819</u> | <u>\$ 6,142,651</u> | <u>\$31,571,470</u> |

See accompanying independent auditor's report and notes to financial statements.

TOWN OF BENNINGTON, VERMONT

BUDGETARY COMPARISON SCHEDULE - BUDGETARY BASIS
 BUDGET AND ACTUAL - GENERAL FUND
 FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2023

| | Budgeted Amounts | | Actual Amounts | Variance Positive (Negative) |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|
| | Original | Final | | |
| Budgetary Fund Balance - July 1 | \$ 5,762,655 | \$ 5,762,655 | \$ 5,762,655 | \$ - |
| Resources (Inflows): | | | | |
| Property taxes | 12,931,790 | 12,931,790 | 12,994,488 | 62,698 |
| Intergovernmental | 1,007,090 | 1,007,090 | 4,370,689 | 3,363,599 |
| Permits, licenses and fees | 558,400 | 558,400 | 417,040 | (141,360) |
| Miscellaneous revenues | 105,500 | 105,500 | 680,603 | 575,103 |
| Bond proceeds | - | - | 347,330 | 347,330 |
| Transfers from other funds | 248,000 | 248,000 | 261,000 | 13,000 |
| Amounts Available for Appropriation | <u>20,613,435</u> | <u>20,613,435</u> | <u>24,833,805</u> | <u>4,220,370</u> |
| Charges to Appropriations (Outflows): | | | | |
| Current: | | | | |
| General government | 3,635,220 | 3,796,201 | 3,728,406 | 67,795 |
| Public safety | 4,596,810 | 6,090,231 | 5,352,111 | 738,120 |
| Public works | 259,150 | 259,150 | 260,729 | (1,579) |
| Health and welfare | 7,950 | 7,950 | 7,728 | 222 |
| Recreation | 654,060 | 697,184 | 1,789,348 | (1,092,164) |
| Highways and roads | 3,662,830 | 3,662,830 | 4,131,630 | (468,800) |
| Parking | - | - | 126,780 | (126,780) |
| Agencies | 920,980 | 920,980 | 920,980 | - |
| Other | 181,900 | 2,017,492 | 820,649 | 1,196,843 |
| Debt service: | | | | |
| Principal | 637,610 | 637,610 | 582,949 | 54,661 |
| Interest | 154,270 | 154,270 | 145,146 | 9,124 |
| Capital outlay | - | - | 128,646 | (128,646) |
| Transfers to other funds | 140,000 | 140,000 | 44,200 | 95,800 |
| Total Charges to Appropriations | <u>14,850,780</u> | <u>18,383,898</u> | <u>18,039,302</u> | <u>344,596</u> |
| Budgetary Fund Balance - June 30 | <u>\$ 5,762,655</u> | <u>\$ 2,229,537</u> | <u>\$ 6,794,503</u> | <u>\$ 4,564,966</u> |
| Utilization of Restricted Fund Balance | \$ - | \$ 1,486,834 | \$ - | \$ (1,486,834) |
| Utilization of Committed Fund Balance | - | 2,046,284 | - | (2,046,284) |
| | <u>\$ -</u> | <u>\$ 3,533,118</u> | <u>\$ -</u> | <u>\$ (3,533,118)</u> |

See accompanying independent auditor's report and notes to financial statements.

TOWN OF BENNINGTON, VERMONT

BUDGETARY COMPARISON SCHEDULE - BUDGETARY BASIS
 BUDGET AND ACTUAL - GENERAL FUND REVENUES
 FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2023

| | Final Budget | Actual | Variance Positive (Negative) |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| REVENUES | | | |
| Property taxes: | | | |
| General | \$ 8,384,110 | \$ 8,431,531 | \$ 47,421 |
| Highway | 3,882,450 | 3,882,450 | - |
| Fire | 395,230 | 395,230 | - |
| Penalties and interest | 270,000 | 285,277 | 15,277 |
| Intergovernmental: | | | |
| Federal and state grants | 176,000 | 3,476,931 | 3,300,931 |
| Highway | 228,000 | 269,173 | 41,173 |
| In lieu of taxes | 603,090 | 624,585 | 21,495 |
| Permits, licenses and fees: | | | |
| Alcoholic beverages | 6,000 | 6,105 | 105 |
| Dog licenses | 7,000 | 7,346 | 346 |
| Marriage licenses | 3,000 | 1,550 | (1,450) |
| Town clerk fees | 15,000 | 10,868 | (4,132) |
| Building and zoning permits | 51,000 | 40,621 | (10,379) |
| Fire permits | 4,000 | 4,420 | 420 |
| Highway | 10,000 | 11,306 | 1,306 |
| Landfill | 15,000 | 24,481 | 9,481 |
| Police fees | 253,400 | 109,724 | (143,676) |
| Vital records fees | 45,000 | 52,188 | 7,188 |
| Recording fees | 130,000 | 129,642 | (358) |
| Animal control fines | - | 149 | 149 |
| Parking fees | - | 1,982 | 1,982 |
| Sale of cemetery lots | 2,000 | - | (2,000) |
| Recreation center fees | 5,000 | 6,755 | 1,755 |
| Senior citizens | 12,000 | 9,903 | (2,097) |
| Other income: | | | |
| Interest income | 10,000 | 107,541 | 97,541 |
| Rental income | 20,500 | 63,205 | 42,705 |
| Gain on sale of assets | - | 11,049 | 11,049 |
| Parking improvements | - | 102,694 | 102,694 |
| Donations | 3,000 | 13,750 | 10,750 |
| Renewable energy | 35,000 | 31,646 | (3,354) |
| Other income | 37,000 | 350,718 | 313,718 |
| Bond proceeds | - | 347,330 | 347,330 |
| Transfers in | 248,000 | 261,000 | 13,000 |
| Total revenues | <u>\$ 14,850,780</u> | <u>\$ 19,071,150</u> | <u>\$ 4,220,370</u> |

See accompanying independent auditor's report and notes to financial statements.

SCHEDULE B

TOWN OF BENNINGTON, VERMONT

SCHEDULE OF DEPARTMENTAL OPERATIONS - GENERAL FUND
FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2023

| | Original Budget | Final Budget | Actual | Variance Positive (Negative) |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------------------------|
| GENERAL GOVERNMENT | | | | |
| Selectboard | \$ 21,550 | \$ 21,550 | \$ 21,032 | \$ 518 |
| Town manager | 259,390 | 259,390 | 263,916 | (4,526) |
| Information technology | - | - | 31,065 | (31,065) |
| Treasurer | 18,330 | 18,330 | 17,539 | 791 |
| Accounting | 304,250 | 304,250 | 301,992 | 2,258 |
| Listing | 169,620 | 169,620 | 167,053 | 2,567 |
| Tax collecting | 168,610 | 168,610 | 174,652 | (6,042) |
| Town clerk | 207,180 | 207,180 | 200,910 | 6,270 |
| Planning and zoning | 295,400 | 295,400 | 330,458 | (35,058) |
| Economic development | 319,950 | 319,950 | 285,485 | 34,465 |
| Administration | 954,600 | 954,600 | 949,541 | 5,059 |
| Buildings and grounds | 916,340 | 1,077,321 | 984,763 | 92,558 |
| | <u>3,635,220</u> | <u>3,796,201</u> | <u>3,728,406</u> | <u>67,795</u> |
| PUBLIC SAFETY | | | | |
| Police | 4,268,100 | 4,268,100 | 3,945,112 | 322,988 |
| Fire | 328,710 | 1,822,131 | 1,406,999 | 415,132 |
| | <u>4,596,810</u> | <u>6,090,231</u> | <u>5,352,111</u> | <u>738,120</u> |
| PUBLIC WORKS | | | | |
| Solid waste management | 226,150 | 226,150 | 204,758 | 21,392 |
| Cemetery | 33,000 | 33,000 | 55,971 | (22,971) |
| | <u>259,150</u> | <u>259,150</u> | <u>260,729</u> | <u>(1,579)</u> |
| HEALTH AND WELFARE | | | | |
| Health officer | 7,950 | 7,950 | 7,728 | 222 |
| | <u>7,950</u> | <u>7,950</u> | <u>7,728</u> | <u>222</u> |
| RECREATION | | | | |
| Administration | 208,820 | 208,820 | 207,919 | 901 |
| Indoor pool | 16,030 | 16,030 | 25,520 | (9,490) |
| Parks | 57,250 | 57,250 | 77,450 | (20,200) |
| Pathways | 29,700 | 72,824 | 904,577 | (831,753) |
| Buildings | 152,970 | 152,970 | 168,463 | (15,493) |
| Vehicles and equipment | 41,500 | 41,500 | 37,988 | 3,512 |
| Bennington High | - | - | 231,696 | (231,696) |
| Senior Citizen's Center | 107,990 | 107,990 | 98,409 | 9,581 |
| Senior Citizen's - buidling | 39,800 | 39,800 | 37,326 | 2,474 |
| | <u>654,060</u> | <u>697,184</u> | <u>1,789,348</u> | <u>(1,092,164)</u> |

SCHEDULE B (CONTINUED)
TOWN OF BENNINGTON, VERMONT

SCHEDULE OF DEPARTMENTAL OPERATIONS - GENERAL FUND
FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2023

| | Original Budget | Final Budget | Actual | Variance Positive (Negative) |
|--|--------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------------------------|
| HIGHWAYS AND ROADS | | | | |
| Administration and buildings | 1,930,500 | 1,930,500 | 1,948,180 | (17,680) |
| Construction and maint - Town highways | 466,460 | 466,460 | 470,707 | (4,247) |
| Highway projects | 342,150 | 342,150 | 298,983 | 43,167 |
| Installation and maint - traffic control | 82,940 | 82,940 | 89,121 | (6,181) |
| Buildings | 84,400 | 84,400 | 143,338 | (58,938) |
| Sidewalks | 241,060 | 241,060 | 119,435 | 121,625 |
| Bridges | 12,000 | 12,000 | 620 | 11,380 |
| Streetlights | 116,500 | 116,500 | 127,089 | (10,589) |
| Downtown | 37,950 | 37,950 | 37,152 | 798 |
| Vehicles and equipment | 348,870 | 348,870 | 897,005 | (548,135) |
| | <u>3,662,830</u> | <u>3,662,830</u> | <u>4,131,630</u> | <u>(468,800)</u> |
| DEBT SERVICE | | | | |
| Principal | 637,610 | 637,610 | 582,949 | 54,661 |
| Interest | 154,270 | 154,270 | 145,146 | 9,124 |
| | <u>791,880</u> | <u>791,880</u> | <u>728,095</u> | <u>63,785</u> |
| CAPITAL OUTLAY | | | | |
| | - | - | 128,646 | (128,646) |
| PARKING | | | | |
| | - | - | 126,780 | (126,780) |

SCHEDULE B (CONTINUED)

TOWN OF BENNINGTON, VERMONT

SCHEDULE OF DEPARTMENTAL OPERATIONS - GENERAL FUND
FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2023

| | Original Budget | Final Budget | Actual | Variance Positive (Negative) |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------------------|
| AGENCIES | | | | |
| Visiting Nurses Association | 21,600 | 21,600 | 21,600 | - |
| Bennington County Regional Commission | 33,680 | 33,680 | 33,680 | - |
| Bennington Project Independence | 11,000 | 11,000 | 11,000 | - |
| Bennington-Rutland Opportunity Council | 6,750 | 6,750 | 6,750 | - |
| North Bennington Recreation | 6,000 | 6,000 | 6,000 | - |
| Paran Recreation | 2,700 | 2,700 | 2,700 | - |
| Project Against Violent Encounters | 5,000 | 5,000 | 5,000 | - |
| Retired Seniors Volunteer Program | 5,500 | 5,500 | 5,500 | - |
| Southwest Vermont Council on Aging | 7,500 | 7,500 | 7,500 | - |
| Tutorial Center | 10,000 | 10,000 | 10,000 | - |
| Vermont Center for Independent Living | 7,000 | 7,000 | 7,000 | - |
| Bennington Free Clinic | 12,500 | 12,500 | 12,500 | - |
| BCA Against Child Abuse | 5,000 | 5,000 | 5,000 | - |
| Bennington Homeless Shelters | 25,000 | 25,000 | 25,000 | - |
| Sunrise Family Resource Center | 15,000 | 15,000 | 15,000 | - |
| Bennington Rescue Squad | 206,250 | 206,250 | 206,250 | - |
| Bennington Free Library | 498,000 | 498,000 | 498,000 | - |
| John McCullough Free Library | 42,500 | 42,500 | 42,500 | - |
| | <u>920,980</u> | <u>920,980</u> | <u>920,980</u> | <u>-</u> |
| OTHER | | | | |
| Appalachian Trail | - | 785 | 528 | 257 |
| ARPA grant | - | 1,486,834 | 370,311 | 1,116,523 |
| Planning grant | - | - | 9,900 | (9,900) |
| County tax payments | 90,000 | 90,000 | 93,608 | (3,608) |
| Bennington Battle Day | 15,000 | 15,000 | 15,000 | - |
| Fireworks | 7,500 | 7,500 | 15,300 | (7,800) |
| Flood Control Program | 6,800 | 6,800 | 1,533 | 5,267 |
| Holiday Celebrations | 7,500 | 7,500 | 6,085 | 1,415 |
| Memorial/Veterans Day | 1,600 | 1,600 | 1,600 | - |
| Bennington in Bloom | 24,000 | 24,000 | 27,302 | (3,302) |
| Conserve Public Shade Trees | 9,500 | 9,500 | 8,585 | 915 |
| Marketing | - | 11,819 | 38,251 | (26,432) |
| Senior Center Programs | - | - | 955 | (955) |
| Splash Pad | - | - | 6,995 | (6,995) |
| Memorial Fountain | - | - | 354 | (354) |
| Health Management Fees | - | 336,154 | 214,941 | 121,213 |
| Safety and Recognition | - | - | 341 | (341) |
| Dog Park | - | - | 263 | (263) |
| Contingency | 20,000 | 20,000 | 8,797 | 11,203 |
| | <u>181,900</u> | <u>2,017,492</u> | <u>820,649</u> | <u>1,196,843</u> |
| TRANSFERS TO OTHER FUNDS | <u>140,000</u> | <u>140,000</u> | <u>44,200</u> | <u>95,800</u> |
| TOTAL DEPARTMENTAL OPERATIONS | <u>\$ 14,850,780</u> | <u>\$ 18,383,898</u> | <u>\$ 18,039,302</u> | <u>\$ 344,596</u> |

See accompanying independent auditor's report and notes to financial statements.

Notes: