



Town of Bennington

Communications Coordinator Report — March 28, 2022

After six months on the job...

I had my official six month review which was positive and I have completed my probationary time with the town. The time has gone incredibly quickly and it has been a great joy for me personally to do this work.

Citizen Outreach:

I've had fewer citizen outreaches this past month but I have seen an increase in Public Records Requests. I spent four hours this past month fulfilling these requests. While the town is not subject to Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests, Vermont has a Public Records Request (PRR) law that essentially serves the same purpose. The idea behind these sorts of laws is beyond reproach; we WANT all town records to be fully available to the community and we WANT everything we do to be transparent.

A.T. Community and Business Outreach

Planning is underway for a Bennington A.T. Community "Trailfest" this coming July. Part of this effort includes encouraging local businesses to become A.T. Community Supporters, and we have had eight businesses sign up to offer discounts to A.T. /L.T. hikers coming to Bennington.

Lead Lines Outreach:

In coordination with MSK Engineering, I have been helping to push out information regarding the grant funded effort to remove and replace all lead lines from the water system in Bennington. Posts on social media have generated good exposure for this effort, averaging 2,000-3,000 reach for each post.

250th Planning:

I was involved in the planning of a 250th Anniversary event honoring Remember Baker. Baker was a captain in the Green Mountain Boys and was a cousin to Ethan and Ira Allan. The ceremony was originally planned to be video taped only, but with the relaxing of COVID restrictions the event became public and drew dozens of spectators.

Willow Park Playground Outreach:

The community continues to be very interested in the Willow Park playground redevelopment. ARPA funding has been approved for the \$500,000 effort, a vendor has been chosen, and outreach will begin as soon as the design choices are ready, which should be in the next week or two. I am working closely with Katie West and the SVSU to include input from parents, teachers, students, and grandparents on the playground designs and colors.

Riverwalk:

I am assisting the BBC Design Committee with a presentation on the Riverwalk scoping study and the Town supported grant with Michael McDonough for the Bennington Rotary.

Website Update:

A vendor has been chosen for the Town website redevelopment and the initial payment to start work should be sent out next week pending warrant approval from the Select Board. The total cost for the redesign and photography for the new combined web site will be around \$12,000.

Community Newsletter:

A second issue of the new bi-monthly Community Newsletter was printed and distributed in early March. We are grateful to the Bennington Banner for this collaboration!

Cyber Security / IT:

We watch closely developments in Ukraine and how it pertains to cybersecurity risks here in the USA. An increase in cyber attacks is expected and we want to be as ready as possible.

Annual Meeting and Other Projects:

Bennington's 260th annual meeting was held via Zoom and I was very involved in the planning and execution of the town meeting event. The prior planning paid off with a smoothly run meeting with no

major problems.

I was also involved with the update to our ARPA priority list and with developing the ARPA update presentation to the select board and the community. This included gathering and reviewing public input and progress updates on projects that staff are currently working on. All the information regarding where we stand on ARPA projects, costs, and remaining ARPA funds are available on the town website.

Organizational Collaboration:

I continue to work with various organizations throughout the community and attended a Continuum of Care meeting last month. My goal is to improve

communication with the town and these various organizations and to help with the eventual creation of memorandums of understanding between the BPD and community organizations as per the new Collaboration policy adopted in January 2022.

Safety and Equity:

I was involved in a staff capacity with the development of the public presentation of the final report of the Safety and Equity task force which took place on February 21. That work has now shifted to the Select Board as they reconcile task force recommendations with applicable state laws.

Facebook POST OF THE MONTH:

Our Department of Public Works continues to be the source of many of the most popular Town posts in terms of reach with a whopping 8,400 for this post about snow plowing.

Building engagement with the community using social media is an important way for the town to bring greater awareness of what we do here on a daily basis.

Our DPW is our front line for community outreach. They are the ones that most folks see the most! I have heard over and over from members of the community about positive interactions they have with town workers. These dedicated employees work very hard and take pride in their work... and it shows.

Post details

Town of Bennington
March 1 · 🌐

When the going gets tough... the snowplows come out!

Being in a Vermont town, Walter Sweet is no stranger to dealing with snow. "We are ready — we have the equipment!" says Sweet who is a 26-year member of the Highway Department. What you might not know is that our snowplows work in teams. In front are the iconic "big" trucks with the massive plow and 18 cubic yards of salt in the back. Following behind is the clean-up truck, mostly one-ton trucks, which follows behind and does... [See more](#)

Performance for your post

8,450 People Reached		
321 Reactions, Comments & Shares		
258 Like	110 On Post	148 On Shares
7 Love	2 On Post	5 On Shares
30 Comments	17 On Post	13 On Shares
26 Shares	26 On Post	0 On Shares
1,204 Post Clicks		
377 Photo views	0 Link clicks	827 Other clicks

Reported stats may be delayed from what appears on posts

8,450 People reached **1,525** Engagements [Boost post](#)