



# Town of Bennington

Communications Coordinator Report — January 10, 2022

## **After three months on the job,**

I now know enough about the town's inner workings to say how impressed I am with the level of pride and dedication shown by Town employees. No business or organization is perfect, but as someone coming from the outside and getting a full look "under the hood" at Town operations, there is ample reason for the citizens of this community to be proud of the team they have at the Town working on their behalf. This is a new position for the town, and my role is evolving as time goes on. The primary function is to share with the community what is happening at the town and to facilitate communication of all types both internally and externally.

## **Citizen Outreach:**

Meeting with citizens is a regular part of my job. In some ways, I am the complaint department of last resort. Some problems are complex and are not quickly or easily addressed. In those cases, I work with individuals on an ongoing basis and will stick with them until there is a resolution. I've had 54 citizen outreaches in my first three months.

## **Business Outreach:**

Including the business community in my work is a key component. I make a point of going out and meeting usinsspeople on a regular basis to simply hear about their concerns and to solicit their input on Town activities. I also work with the Chamber and the BBC doing broader business outreach, addressing individual business concerns, and facilitating business groups in helping promote and amplify their marketing efforts.

## **Celebratory Events:**

Talking about our successes is important and something that was not well covered in the past. I have worked on a number of celebratory events including the Climate Advocates Bennington award ceremony honoring the Bennington Police Department, the ribbon cutting ceremony for the opening of the Orchard Village - Willowbrook Pathway, and the unveiling ceremony for the completion of the 219 Pleasant Street project with Hale Resources.

## **Facebook and Social Media:**

Facebook is our primary social media outlet. We are currently averaging 15,000 per month in our reach and 5,000

in our engagement. All unique information that is posted on social media is also on our Town website under "news." We will be adding Instagram in 2022 to reach different demographic groups.

## **2021 Bennington Survey:**

A thirty-three-question resident survey was completed, and results were shared with the community and with various Town departments and partners to inform their work. This was a particularly useful exercise for me in my new role and numerous lessons for the next survey were learned.

## **Website Update:**

An RFP for the redesign of the Town website has been sent out and the new website is expected to be completed in the summer of 2022. A focus of the redesign is to improve navigation and ease of access to information, and to combine the three current Town websites into one unified site.

## **Community Newsletter:**

A collaborative effort with the Bennington Banner has resulted in a new bi-monthly community newsletter to highlight programs and activities available in town.

## **250th Anniversary Planning:**

Having Bennington take a lead on planning for the 250th anniversary of the founding of the State of Vermont and the Battle of Bennington both at the State and Federal level is crucial as we explore what is possible. Whatever that may end up being, we want Bennington to be included in the final plans. By demonstrating leadership throughout the process, we will have the support we need from all the other towns and regions when those decisions are made.

## **Outreach by the numbers:**

Number of FB Posts - 73  
(Not including simple announcements)  
Number of emails sent - 1720+/-  
Number of meetings attended - 100

Respectfully Submitted,

Jonah Spivak

— *Communications Coordinator*