

TOWN OF BENNINGTON

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Minutes of the Meeting – October 12, 2016

Selectmen James Cleary, Jeffrey Rose and Steven Osienski were present as well as Administrator Denise French. Also attending the meeting were Bethany Craig and Monadnock Ledger-Transcript reporter Abbey Kessler. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

Conservation Commission representative Valerie Germain met with the Selectmen to discuss the importance of the October 20th Natural Resource Inventory Community Forum. At the recommendation of the Conservation Commission, Selectman Rose signed the Independent Contractual Agreement between Bennington Conservation Commission and Moosewood Ecological LLC. The associated \$3,000 cost was approved by voters at the 2016 Town Meeting.

Scott Plourde met with the Selectmen to request the Board's assistance in obtaining a copy of his Firefighter Certifications as well as his personnel file. At his request, the Selectmen authorized Firefighter Plourde to take a personal leave of absence until April 1, 2017.

The Selectmen took action on the following matters:

- The full Board reviewed and approved the September 28th Minutes. Selectmen Rose and Osienski reviewed and approved the October 5, 2016 Selectmen's Minutes.
- The Selectmen reviewed the August 13th and September 10, 2016 Water/Sewer Commissioners' Minutes. The Selectmen asked that the Commissioners be invited to meet with them to discuss the Commissioners' opinion that responsibility for maintenance of the two Hancock Road grinder pump stations rests with the respective property owners.
- Reviewed the Energy Committee's October 5, 2016 Minutes. The Selectmen will recommend to the Committee that subsequent to the planned street light changeover to LED, the next project should be pursuit of installing solar lighting; possibly on the fire station roof or maybe at the former landfill.
- Reviewed and approved October 6 and October 13 Payroll Registers as well as September 29 and October 6, 2016 Accounts Payable Registers.
- Regarding Fire Department matters:
 - Upon receiving ratification by the membership, the Selectmen are prepared to adopt the amended version of the Fire Department Attendance Policy as proposed to the August 2, 2016 membership.
 - Roof replacement is slated to begin October 17th. Criteria for removal/repair or replacement of the retaining wall will be developed and eventually put out to bid.
 - Tabled discussion of establishing special details and/or establishment of a revolving fund until the Fire Chief is present.
- Discussed an affordable offer for the installation of electrical service at Sawyer Park. Recreation Chair Bethany Craig will inquire about potential users of the Park which might appreciate the addition of electrical service. No decision was made.

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- Received notice from the Cemetery Trustees that they have signed a \$3,700 contract with Northeast Tree & Stump Removal LLC for removal of the problematic tree at Sunnyside Cemetery. The Selectmen agreed to cover the unbudgeted amount of approximately \$1,700 as a one-time event. Moving forward, the Administrator will notify the Cemetery Trustees about involving the Selectmen prior to signing any commitment that exceeds their allotted budget.
- Accepted the Preliminary Tax Rate of \$31.78 for the 2016 tax year. The Selectmen were pleased to know that the Town's portion of the rate was consistent with last year; they were distressed to realize that, other than \$0.07 increase for Hillsborough County expenditures, the balance of the \$1.20 increase is directly attributed to the cost of education. Tax bills will be in the mail by October 31st.
- Received confirmation from the Moderator that each of the Selectmen, or their designated Selectman pro tem, is required to be present for the entire election (voting and counting). Arrangements are underway to provide Selectman pro tem coverage for at least two Board members. The Administrator is also working on providing staffing of Pierce School's lobby, as usual, at the November 8th election.
- Reviewed a copy of the October 6th Ledger-Transcript article, as written by Abbey Kessler, that implies the Conval School Board seems to be unaware of the mutually agreeable community partnership that Pierce School and the Town Offices have forged. School and Town Officials have a well proven student safety precaution plan in place for those times when Pierce School is used as an election site, at no cost to the Conval District. A response from the Town's Administrator has been submitted to the Superintendent's Office.
- Discussed a written taxpayer concern about the Town's choice to seal roads that are not in the deplorable condition as are sections of Old Stagecoach Road where drainage is bad, the road is rutted and the surface has been buckling for several years. The Selectmen have established a Road Advisory Committee and plan to take a more active role in partnership with the Road Agent to address maintenance plans for the Town's aging roads.
- Received, with regret, notification from Officer Frank Morrill of his intention to wrap up part-time police work and resign as of January 1, 2017.
- Received notice from Antrim that they intend to increase Bennington's annual stipend for their ambulance service to \$12,000, an increase of \$4,000. The matter will be discussed with Antrim Town Officials ahead of a planned Tri-Town Landfill meeting on November 2nd.
- Tentatively scheduled the Capital Reserve Funding Committee to meet October 26th.
- Authorized a Main Street resident/bus driver to park a bus in the Town's lot across from the Historical Society on Friday, October 14 and 21, 2016.
- Signed the Election Warrant for the November 8, 2016 elections.
- Signed a Building Permit for M2/L3J.

The Selectmen met in Nonpublic Session to discuss personnel matters under RSA 91-A:3II(a). Present were Selectmen Cleary, Rose and Osienski as well as Administrator French. The Selectmen voted a \$500 stipend to Bethany Craig for her summer management and oversight of Whittemore Beach. The Selectmen voted to recommend a \$0.50 per hour wage adjustment to reflect the Deputy Town Clerk's training and certification at the State level. This has been an existing policy for Town Clerk personnel.

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The Selectmen met in Nonpublic Session to discuss a personnel matter under RSA 91-A:311(c). Present were Selectmen Cleary, Rose and Osienski as well as Administrator French. The Selectmen voted to engage the Town's liability insurance provider for review of a personnel matter.

The meeting adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Denise French
Administrator