

TOWN OF BENNINGTON

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Minutes of the Meeting – March 21, 2017

Selectmen James Cleary and Mark Mackesy were present as well as Administrator Denise French and Bethany Craig. The meeting was called to order at 6:08 p.m.

Road Agent Gary Russell met with the Selectmen and discussed the following:

- Appreciation that the voters approved the \$45,000 warrant article to address deferred road maintenance.
- Concern that the Highway Department could be short-staffed this spring/summer when the Department plans to ramp up operations for addressing the deferred road maintenance.
- Joint agreement that the Town will immediately advertise the vacant Labor/Truck Driver staff opening; applications will be received until a suitable candidate is found.
- While renting an excavator for six weeks the Highway Department will remove more material from M15/L6 to allow depth for non-usable material to be buried, thereby reducing the cost of cleanup which will offset delivery of 4400 yards of material.

Acting Fire Chief Matthew Hall and Lieutenant David Foster met with the Selectmen to discuss Fire Department operations in the wake of the former Fire Chief's March 8th resignation without notice. Upon discussion of the Department's proposed plans for moving forward, the return of three members and three new applicants the Selectmen voted to appoint David Foster Fire Chief for one year.

Recreation Chair Bethany Craig inquired if the Town could provide a financial incentive for interested life guard applicants which could cover the cost of certification/recertification, or a bonus of equal value at the end of summer to an employee who might be fully certified at the time of hire. The Selectmen agreed this could be a condition of hire as long as new or existing life guards were in line to receive a similar monetary benefit.

The Selectmen took action on the following matters:

- James Cleary reviewed the February 28 and March 13 Minutes and declared the document a true reflection of events from each Board meeting. The Selectmen also reviewed the March 1, 2017 Energy Committee Minutes as well as the February 16, 2017 Conservation Commission Minutes.
- Selectmen Cleary reviewed and approved the March 9 and March 16, 2017 Payroll Registers as well as the March 16, 2017 Account Payable Register.
- Selectmen Cleary and Mackesy reviewed and approved the March 23, 2017 Payroll Register. Also reviewed were expenditures for the period January 1 through March 20, 2017 which reflects the March 16, 2017 Town Meeting results.
- Discussed filling the Selectman vacancy; Selectman Mackesy proposed appointing Jeff Rose to fill the vacancy. Mark volunteered to call Jeff to explore his interest. The matter is tabled until the Board's next meeting.
- In light of receiving only one Assessing Proposal, the Board voted to extend the submission deadline to March 29th at 4:00 p.m.

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- Reviewed the Town and School voting results and were pleased to note that all requested warrant articles were approved by Bennington and Conval School District voters. The Administrator will make a formal request of the Trustees of Trust Funds that, in accordance with the affirmative vote of Warrant Article 5, the Sewer Department Septic Lagoon Dredging Capital Reserve Fund be discontinued with funds and accumulated interest to date be transferred to the Town's general fund.
- Agreed with resident Joe Cuddemi's phone call of appreciation for the Highway Department's ability to keep the Town's roads and sidewalks promptly cleared and safe for travelers and pedestrians.
- As a result of appointing Fire Chief David Foster for a one year term, the Selectmen agreed to cancel their exploratory meeting with the Antrim Selectmen.
- The 2016 Equalized Assessment Ratio has been set at 91.5%; the 2015 Ratio was 95.5% which is an indicator that real estate sales are rebounding.
- Received information that the State of New Hampshire and Rivada Networks are proposing to deliver an LTE network in the 700 MHZ Band that is specifically designated for Public Safety., The proposed network is being purposely built for NH police officers, firefighters, emergency medical technicians, and other front line officers. Through *The 2012 Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act* the mission will also provide a platform for innovation and economic development that has the potential to create jobs and competition across the State.
- In response to a \$122.52 budget request from MCVP: Crisis & Prevention Center, and upon recommendation of Police Chief Bret Sullivan, the Selectmen authorized the expenditure.
- Tabled consideration of installing electrical service at Sawyer Park until a Board of three Selectmen can discuss and vote on the matter.
- Authorized the Administrator to enter into a Credit Card Agreement with Interware Development for establishment of credit/debit card payments for Town services.
- The Selectmen nominated Jonathan Manley for reappointment to the Local River Management Advisory Committee.
- Reviewed and approved a Veteran's Tax Credit for M10/L59 as well as M12/L1C/18.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Denise French
Administrator