

TOWN OF BENNINGTON

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Minutes of the Meeting – June 7, 2017

Selectmen James Cleary, Mark Mackesy and Jeffrey Rose were present as well as Administrator Denise French. The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m.

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

- The unfulfilled need to find a temporary full-time employee
- The Eaton Avenue water line extension installation has been rescheduled to later this summer due to wet ground
- Maintenance at Old Stagecoach Road is more extensive than planned; the road will be topped with pug mill
- Pug mill will also be installed on North Bennington Road to the Iron Bridge
- Gary will seek estimates to stripe crosswalks and other road markings
- Agreed that the Town contract roadside mowing
- Further discussed drainage at M7/L121 where the lawn drops below the shoulder. Gary agreed to add hard-pack at the mail box.
- The Town is not licensed to spray public property to alleviate poison ivy
- Disturbed lawn at M7/L78 will be redressed
- Reminded that the sprinkler head at the Common is in need of repair
- The Town could benefit from purchasing connecting barrels under a NH the Beautiful Grant

From 6:37 p.m. until 6:53 p.m. the Selectmen met in Nonpublic Session. Selectman Cleary made a motion at 6:36 p.m. to enter into Nonpublic Session under RSA 91-A:311(c); Selectmen Rose, Cleary and Mackesy each voted to enter into the Nonpublic Session. Also present during the Nonpublic Session was Administrator French and Road Agent Russell. The group reviewed applications received for the vacant Transfer Station position. The Selectmen unanimously voted to hire Matthew Blanchard as a part-time Transfer Station employee and an as-needed Town employee at a beginning salary of \$15.00. Selectman Cleary made a motion to reconvene the public session; seconded by Selectman Mackesy. Selectmen Rose, Cleary and Mackesy voted to reconvene the public meeting at 6:54 p.m.

From 6:54 p.m. until 6:59 p.m. the Selectmen met in Nonpublic Session. Selectman Cleary made a motion at 6:54 p.m. to enter into Nonpublic Session under RSA 91-A:311(a); Selectmen Rose, Cleary and Mackesy each voted to enter into the Nonpublic Session. Also present during the Nonpublic Session was Administrator French. In accordance with the FMLA regulations, the Selectmen voted to terminate Walter Kiblin in order to provide an opportunity to hire a temporary full-time Highway Department employee. Selectman Cleary made a motion to reconvene the public session; seconded by Selectman Mackesy.

Richard Reed and Joseph Cuddemi met with the Selectmen and Energy Committee members David McKenzie, Peter Martel, Molly Eppig and Michael Munhall, as well as Temple resident Cathy Joly, to discuss their following street lighting concerns:

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- What qualifications were used when the Committee voted to discontinue 28 street lights?
- Discontinuing Pierce Hill street lights on the dangerous curve is not wise.
- Were the street light abutters engaged in the decision making?
- Security could be compromised; lighting is a deterrent to crime.
- Safety of pedestrians and vehicles; surprise that input from the Police Chief was not sought.
- Has PSNH/Eversource files been researched for historic data that might shed light on the existing placement of fixtures?
- Joseph Cuddemi shared his experience as a member of the former Street Light Committee and the parameters that the Committee used when determining removal of street light fixtures.

The Energy Committee's responses included the following:

- The Committee devised a formula that made sense to them.
- Intersections within the Village and highways will be lit as well as crosswalks.
- LED lights are not brighter than Halide lamps; LED lights provide more directional lighting.
- An absolute cost savings will be realized simply by upgrading the lamps. Eversource reports they typically see a 40-50% cost reduction with LED conversions.
- The Town currently has an opportunity to receive a \$100 rebate for each LED lamp purchased. Future funding of rebates is not guaranteed beyond 2017. If all 48 existing Halide lamps were upgraded to LED this year the Town would benefit from a potential \$4,800 rebate.

The Selectmen tabled making a decision pending further discussion between the Board and the Energy Committee; the group is tentatively scheduled to meet June 21st at 7:00 p.m. As requested, the Selectmen will notify Mr. Reed and Mr. Cuddemi when a final decision is rendered.

Susan and Michael Smith met with the Selectmen to discuss the following:

- Suggested that the Town restore the annual Free Recycling Day at the Transfer Station to avoid discards that they notice while walking in the woods. Conceptual ideas included a fall Free Day rather than the customary spring Day; alternately the concept of charging one-half of the established disposal fees. No decisions were made.
- The elimination of the Town's participation in the Household Hazardous Waste Collection program hosted at the Keene Recycling Center. Conceptual ideas were also discussed for an amenable solution.
- Inquired about how many unregistered vehicles were allowed on each property.

The Selectmen took action on the following matters:

- Reviewed and approved the Selectmen's May 31, 2017 Minutes.
- Reviewed the Water/Sewer Commissioners' May 1, 2017 Minutes.
- Reviewed and approved the June 8, 2017 Payroll and Accounts Payable Registers; also reviewed were Expenditures for the period January through May.
- Established June 21, 2017 for a Public Hearing date to ratify the 2017 Town Meeting.
- Discussed giving employees the day off on Monday, July 3rd. Selectmen Mackesy and Rose voted their approval if the day off was without pay; Selectman Cleary was in favor of giving the employees the day off with pay. The Board agreed that if all staff wanted to take the day off without pay that their respective Department would be closed on July 3rd.

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- Heard a report that the Supreme Court has ruled in the Town's favor with regard to Eversource's 2012 Appeal. Public Service Company of New Hampshire d/b/a Eversource Energy (PSNH), appealed an order of the NH Board of Tax and Land Appeals (BTLA) denying 55 of the respondent municipalities for Tax Year 2012. In July 2015, the BTLA denied the Eversource appeal; PSNH moved for a rehearing, which the BTLA denied by written order in September 2015. The matter was appealed to the Supreme Court.
- Tabled establishment of the Board's summer meeting schedule.
- Received notice from the NH Division of Forests and Lands that they have issued a variance to Donald Hardwick to remove more than 50% of the basal area along approximately 2,500 feet of Mountain Road, Map5/L4, for silvicultural reasons.
- Discussed a suggestion from a Great Brook School teacher who recommended that each of the four Great Brook communities recognize the top student of their Town at the 8th Grade Celebration. The Selectmen agreed to provide a gifted historical book to Bennington's top 8th grade student at the Celebration slated for June 21st.
- Heard a report that Crotched Mountain Ski and Ride could be interested in using the Transfer Station for recycling. The Selectmen asked that the Transfer Station Ordinance be viewed to determine if Town businesses are subject to special provisions.
- Signed a Supplemental Property Tax Warrant for M7/L107.

The meeting adjourned at 9:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Denise French
Administrator