

TOWN OF BENNINGTON

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Minutes of the Meeting – April 30, 2019

Selectmen James Cleary and David Hardwick, Sr. were present as well as Town Administrator Kristie LaPlante. The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m.

Water and Sewer Commissioners David Beck and Richard Reed met with the Selectmen to provide a project close out report on the work done as part of the Water Asset Management Program, an overview of the tasks to be accomplished under the Sewer Asset Management Program, and a cursory review of the 2019 Water & Sewer Rate Study data that is currently underway. The Selectmen were amazed at the quality and quantity of work done by the Commissioners and the Town's consultants. The Commissioners plan to meet with the Selectmen later in the year to further discuss the Water and Sewer Rate Study after is completed.

Cemetery Trustees Karen Bartlett, Melissa Clark, and Bethany Craig joined the Selectmen along with George Chicoine to discuss his interest in mowing the Town's two cemeteries. Cemetery Recording Secretary Debra Belcher was also in attendance. After some discussion of the expectations of work to be done, the Selectmen authorized the Cemetery Trustees to award the Cemetery Mowing to George Chicoine at a cost of \$10,750. The Cemetery Trustees and Selectmen will meet with Mr. Chicoine at the end of the season to discuss the 2020 mowing responsibilities.

Town Clerk Debra Belcher and Assistant Town Clerk Karen Belcher met with the Selectmen to discuss a preservation project for which the Town Clerk's Office has applied for grant funding to the NH State Library. In December 2018, the Town Clerk's applied for \$3,370 in funding for the conservation and microfilming of two volumes of the history and genealogical notes of Old Society Land prior to it becoming incorporated as the Town of Bennington (1753-1842). The Town Clerk's were awarded \$1,000 in grant funding which would not be adequate to complete the grant. After review of the Town Clerk's budget, the Selectmen authorized the Town Clerk's Office to proceed with completion of the project as intended, with Town funds to come from dollars anticipated to be saved due to the resignation of the Deputy Town Clerk.

Debra Belcher inquired of the Board if they would change Karen Belcher's position from Assistant Town Clerk to Deputy Town Clerk with the intent of eliminating the third position within that office. Debra also inquired about providing Karen a raise because she will be working more hours and she won't be home on Thursday evenings. In the absence of a full Board, Selectmen Cleary and Hardwick declined to take action.

The Selectmen reviewed correspondence from Town Counsel relative to the terms of accepting the gift of land approved by voters at the 2019 Town Meeting (Map 7, Lot 18). Keeping the voters' intentions in mind, the Selectmen agreed to the donor's request that no structures be permitted (except for a gazebo) and the use remain as passive recreation, parking, and gazebo. The Selectmen also agreed with the donor's request to remove verbiage relative to priority use of the property.

At 7:35 p.m. a motion was made by Selectman Cleary to enter into Nonpublic Session under RSA 91-A:3-II(c) and seconded by David Hardwick; all voted in favor of entering Nonpublic Session. Also present during the Nonpublic Session was Town Administrator Kristie LaPlante. The Selectmen discussed comments circulating within the community about a Town Department and their staff. The Selectmen will meet with the

Department Head at a future date. No decisions were made. Selectman Cleary made a motion to reconvene the Public Session; seconded by Selectman Hardwick; all voted to reconvene the Public Session at 7:58 p.m.

In other items on their Agenda, the Selectmen took the following action:

- Reviewed and approved the Minutes of the Board's April 10, 2019 meeting.
- Due to the increased use of Sawyer Park and scope of projects currently scheduled for the Highway Department, the Selectman authorized George Chicoine to mow Sawyer Park this year.
- Voted to change the Board's meeting night from Wednesday to Tuesday; there are no changes to the time or location.
- Heard a report that the State of NH will be applying a ¾" shim to South Bennington Road (1.3 miles) this summer.
- Approved a resident's request to plant lilies at the intersection of Eaton/Bible/Antrim/Main Street at no cost to the Town.
- Reviewed correspondence from NHDES that outlines their freshwater beach sampling program and decision to cease monitoring freshwater beaches (through water samples). Based on the NHDES report that freshwater beaches have low incidence of fecal bacteria contamination, the Selectmen opted not to pursue water sampling at the Town's expense.
- Heard a report that Stantec has recommended the installation of some form of barrier at each gas well to better mark the location. The Selectmen would like these barriers installed at minimal cost to the Tri-Towns and also requested the Highway Department to address ditching and culverts while waiting for the Onset Road restoration project to start.
- The Selectmen reviewed the NHDES Clean Water State Revolving Load Fund Application and contract proposed by Underwood Engineers and authorized the Town Administrator to sign and execute necessary paperwork required for submission of the grant application. In their Designation of Authorities, the Selectmen resolved that "The person holding the position of Town Administrator, currently held by Kristie LaPlante, is hereby designated as the Authorized Representative of the Applicant for the purpose of filing an application for a loan in accordance with NH Code of Administrative Rules Chapter Env-Wq500, furnishing such information, data, and documents pertaining to the applicant for a loan as may be required".
- Discussed feedback from the Insurance Adjuster relative to fluid buildup under the Loader that was damaged by fire as well as a report from Hillsborough Ford that indicates a lengthy coolant leak in the 2013 Police Cruiser and the subsequent need to emphasize the importance of timely and routine vehicle and equipment maintenance on all Town assets.
- Requested a list of all properties owned by the Town to identify properties that could be offered for sale via sealed bid.
- The Selectmen reviewed and approved the following:
  - Intents to Cut for Map 16/Lot 3, Map 7/Lot 46, and abutting Cold Springs Land Trust properties on Maps 17 and 18.
  - Gravel Tax Levy for Map 11, Lot 12.

There being no other business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristie LaPlante