

TOWN OF BENNINGTON

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Minutes of the Meeting – May 7, 2019

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

At 6:03 p.m. a motion was made by Jim Cleary to enter into Nonpublic Session under RSA 91-A:3-II(c) and seconded by Mark Mackesy; all voted in favor of entering Nonpublic Session. Also present during the Nonpublic Session was Town Administrator Kristie LaPlante. The Selectmen discussed a communication breakdown and employment concerns within the Highway Department. The Selectmen discussed the need for any future changes in the Highway Department schedule to be reflective of work that needs to be done with a strong consideration for the level of service being provided to the community. Effective immediately, the Selectmen will require the Road Agent to complete and post a schedule each week (post on Thursday if the Highway Department is working 4, 10-hour shifts and by Friday if they are working 5, 8-hour shifts). The Road Agent will be required to provide a status report to the Selectmen of what the Department completed/accomplished each week. Selectman Cleary made a motion to reconvene the Public Session; seconded by Selectman Mackesy; all voted to reconvene the Public Session at 6:08 p.m.

Police Chief Bret Sullivan met with the Selectmen to discuss happenings within the Police Department. Among mutual items discussed:

- Despite rumors within the community, Chief Sullivan has no intentions of retiring any time soon.
- The Selectmen addressed with the Chief rumors that have been circulating within the community of unrest within the Police Department. The Chief will address the Selectmen's concern.
- At this point the Chief feels he has adequate part-time staffing. There are two part-time officers that are regulars on the schedule and three additional part-time officers who fill in as needed. Full-time officers are scheduled for overtime after part-time options have been exhausted. The Chief has been working more overtime lately but that is out of necessity.
- The Selectmen reviewed a maintenance log as determined by invoices for service work. It was recommended that the Chief develop a maintenance routine for their vehicles to either schedule maintenance based on mileage or time since last service.
- The Selectmen have been approached by residents questioning why no police activity from Bennington is reported in the Police Log in the weekly newspaper. Chief Sullivan reported an email problem has been identified and resolved and that any pertinent information will be sent to the newspaper.
- The Department has had a busy start to the year; within a 3-week time span the Police Department began investigating three serious felony level assaults.
- The new cruiser is in service and is currently being operated by the night and weekend officers. The old 2013 Explorer that is now out of service is at the Highway Garage waiting for essential equipment and decals to be removed. The Department's 2016 Explorer is in the process of having the decals replaced to match the new cruiser.

Highway Department employee Damon Beaudreau met with the Selectmen to discuss the Selectmen's April 10, 2019 decision for the Highway Department to work 4, 10-hour days starting June 3. Damon reported that in early April he was told by the acting Department Head that they would be switching to 10-hour days starting May 6th. Road Agent Gary Russell did not notify his employees that he and the Board set June 3rd as the date for the schedule change; Damon found out on May 1st of the change. Based on the May 6th date, Damon has accepted part-time employment that is now compromised due to the lack of communication.

The Selectmen understood Damon's frustrations and agreed to allow the Highway Department to switch to ten hour days starting May 13, 2019. They shared with Damon their decision to require the Road Agent to post a schedule and provide weekly updates to the Board. The Selectmen declined to set an annual date for the schedule change, instead agreeing that any change to the schedule should be reflective of work that needs to be done.

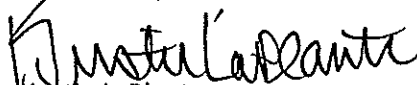
Mountain Road resident John Cronin met with the Selectmen to inquire of the Board their plan to rectify damage continually done to his driveway as a result of water that the Town's ditch line diverts on to his property without benefit of a drainage easement. The Selectmen and Mr. Cronin were in agreement that the issue appears to be compounded by a plugged culvert, a plugged catch basin, and brush in the ditch line. The Selectmen intend for the Highway Department to make repairs as soon as feasible.

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

- Reviewed and approved the Minutes of the Board's April 30, 2019 meeting.
- Reviewed and approved the Accounts Payable Registers for April 11, April 18, and April 25 as well as the Payroll Registers for April 18, April 25, May 2, and May 9, 2019.
- Signed a Proclamation to commemorate Maxwell Davies' Eagle Scout accomplishment.
- Requested the Town Administrator follow up on the status of a hazardous structure located at Map 3, Lot 22.
- Heard a report that the NH Department of Transportation's Traffic Management Center is unable to assist in alerting GPS companies of the trestle height restriction on Antrim Road.
- Voted to authorize a waiver to the Town's Alcohol Policy for the May 25, 2019 Sportsmen's Club Dinner held at the Bennington Fire Station.
- The Selectmen agreed with the Library Trustees' recommendation to reappoint David McKenzie as a Trustee Alternate.

There being no other business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,


Kristie LaPlante