

TOWN OF BENNINGTON

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Minutes of the Meeting – June 30, 2020

Selectmen James Cleary and David Foster were present as well as Town Administrator Kristie LaPlante. The meeting was called to order at 6:20 p.m.

Highway Department employee Matthew Blanchard met with the Selectmen for the purpose of his six-month probationary employment review that was due in May. The Selectmen shared with Matt the positive feedback they have received from the Road Agent and other community members regarding Matt's attitude, work ethic, and attendance. The Selectmen voted to increase Matt's rate of pay retroactive to May 4, 2020 (commensurate with his positive progress).

The Selectmen heard a report that Antrim Water/Sewer coordinated raising the downtown sewer manhole covers  $\frac{3}{4}$ " to correspond with State of NH pavement activities scheduled for summer 2020. This increase was based on initial contract information provided to Antrim Water/Sewer Superintendent Matt Miller that called for no grinding a  $\frac{3}{4}$ " overlay over existing pavement. After the covers were raised Matt was contacted by State officials informing him that the pavement project requires a 2" grind and subsequent 2" overlay, resulting in a 0" increase. The Selectmen were discouraged to hear of the communication gap and asked the Town Administrator to keep them updated on who will be responsible for the costs of raising and lowering the sewer covers.

The Town Administrator reported that the Public Notice printed in the Monadnock Ledger-Transcript soliciting bids for COVID-19 Building Improvements did not include the date submissions were due. The Selectmen agreed to keep the submission period open. Until such time as air quality improvements are made and improvements are made to the customer service window, the Selectmen requested Town Hall Staffing remain as is.

The Selectmen reviewed correspondence from the Town's Assessing Contractor Commerford, Nieder, Perkins, LLC relative to six abatement requests. The Selectmen took the following actions:

- Map 07/Lot 123 – Voted to accept CNP's recommendation to Grant an abatement of \$8,800 value.
- Map 15/Lot 4-3 – Voted to accept CNP's recommendation to Grant an abatement of \$12,300 value.
- Map 01/Lot 13 – Voted to accept CNP's recommendation to Grant an abatement of \$600 value.
- Map 10/Lot 44 – Voted to accept CNP's recommendation to Grant an abatement of \$34,900 value.
- Map 13/Lot 5-C1 – Voted to accept CNP's recommendation to Grant an abatement of \$17,500 value.
- Map 2/Lot 12 – Voted to accept CNP's recommendation to Deny the abatement request.

In Addition, the Selectmen acted on the following matters:

- Approved the Minutes of the Board's June 16 and June 23, 2020 meetings.
- Heard a report that there have been minimal complaints received while issuing Transfer Station Stickers. Once the bulk of Stickers have been issued the Selectmen intend to revisit recycling with the goal of reopening recycling at some point in July.

- Requested additional quotes on scraping and painting the VFW building to determine if the one quote received is fair and equitable.
- Reviewed the Highway Department's schedule as provided by the Road Agent.
- Were pleased to hear that the Board of Tax and Land Appeals ruled that the adjusted George Sansoucy values assigned to Eversource properties for 2014 through 2016 were appropriate. The Town's attorney has cautioned the Town that Eversource has 30 days to appeal and there is a chance this decision can be altered.
- Declined to solicit bids for mowing the Tri-Town Landfill.
- Heard a report that the Governor has signed Emergency Order #56 that would allow Municipalities to hold Public Meetings to consider reducing appropriations prior to setting the 2020 Tax Rate. The Order requires communities to identify increased costs that are not reimbursable and significant reductions in revenues that are both due to COVID-19. The Selectmen will review the Town's financial position in August prior to revenue submission deadlines for the Tax Rate process.
- Heard a report that an electronic payment was missed and the 2019 Tax Lien was executed for Map 11, Lot 3. The Selectmen approved the Tax Collector's request to abate \$20.34 in costs associated with executing the lien.
- Reviewed and approved a Building Permit for Map 24/Lot 20.

There being no other business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 7:16 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristie LaPlante, Town Administrator