

TOWN OF BENNINGTON

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Minutes of the Meeting – March 2, 2021

Selectmen James Cleary, David Foster, and David Hardwick, Sr. were present as well as Town Administrator Kristie LaPlante. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

Chairman Jim Cleary briefed the Board that he met with Highway Department employees Matt Blanchard and Chris Davies on Monday morning to inform them of the Board's vote to terminate the Road Agent and to discuss staffing logistics. Chris will return to a Monday through Friday shift for the Highway Department starting March 8, 2021 while the Department is down to two employees.

Interim Road Agent Matthew Blanchard met with the Selectmen to discuss the staffing change created within the Highway Department. Matt reported he and Chris will work as a team with managing Highway Department tasks and there is amicable agreement that Matt will report to the Selectmen. Matt has found an as-needed employee to fill in for any snow storms this spring. The Selectmen requested that the roads be posted for 6-ton weight limit starting Monday, March 8th. Matt inquired about the transition to 10-hour shifts; the Selectmen declined to confirm a schedule change or establish a date.

At 6:11 p.m. a motion was made by Selectman Jim Cleary to enter in to Non-Public Session under RSA 91-A:3-II(c) and seconded by Selectman David Hardwick; all voted in favor of entering Non-Public Session. Also present during the Non-Public Session was Town Administrator Kristie LaPlante. Selectman Cleary reported to the Board that he received a complaint from a Bennington resident specific to a Bennington Police Officer. The Selectmen discussed the content of the complaint and directed the Town Administrator to obtain copies of Dispatch Logs from Hillsborough Dispatch to use as a tool in investigating the complaint. In Non-Public Session, Chairman Cleary called Chief Sullivan to inform him they had received a complaint and would be investigating further. Selectman Cleary made a motion to reconvene the Public Session; seconded by Selectman Hardwick. All voted to reconvene the Public Session at 6:44 p.m.

Greenfield Road resident Frank Woodward and Code Enforcement Officer John Kendall met with the Selectmen to discuss Mr. Woodward's frustrations with the quality of workmanship from a contractor he hired to complete a project. The Selectmen and John were sympathetic to Mr. Woodward's frustrations but the project was completed according to Code requirements, despite questions about the quality of the workmanship. Citing a potential conflict of interest, John declined Mr. Woodward's invitation for John's personal company to provide an estimate for repair.

Mr. Woodward shared with the Board that he has lived in Bennington since 2016 and he is very thankful for Bennington's small, efficient government. He applauded the Board for their conscientious investment in a used Loader for the Highway Department rather than purchasing a new piece of equipment. The Selectmen thanked Mr. Woodward for his positive feedback.

In addition, the Selectmen reviewed or acted on the following:

- Reviewed and approved Payroll Registers for February 25 and March 3, 2021.
- Reviewed and approved the Minutes of the Board's February 23 and February 27 meetings.
- Discussed the possible impact the Conval Budget may have on taxpayers and the grim reality that positions or services in Town may need to be evaluated for cost effectiveness. The Selectmen

intend to have future discussions with their neighboring communities about Departments, services, or municipal functions that could operate as a Regionalized entity.

- Reviewed the Job Description for the Road Agent position and tabled any discussion on the Road Agent hiring process. The Selectmen intend to review the Job Description for any changes before they proceed with advertising the position.
- Heard a report that the annual Andy McKenzie Fishing Derby is scheduled for Saturday, April 24, 2021.
- Were reminded of the need to count ballots after elections on Tuesday, March 9th.
- Agreed to evaluate alternative Drop Box locations outside Town Hall when the building reopens to the public April 1, 2021.

There being no other issues before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristie LaPlante
Town Administrator