

TOWN OF BENNINGTON

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Minutes of the Meeting – March 16, 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 6:02 p.m.

Transfer Station employee Tom James met with the Board to discuss his continued concern about residents accessing the Transfer Station and disposing of their household trash and recyclables when the Transfer Station is not open. Residents often access the Transfer Station compactor and recyclable containers by entering through the rear of the Transfer Station area and dump their recyclables in random recyclable containers or leave their trash in the compactor. Tom reported the improper disposal after hours has become more frequent since the gate on to the property broke and was not fixed.

The Selectmen and Tom discussed the following:

- The Town has received notice from the Town's glass recycling vendor that the recent load brought for recycling was contaminated with light bulbs, dinner ware, candle holders, aluminum/steel cans, and food waste. Tom reported this contamination is probably a result of people accessing the Transfer Station after hours and improperly disposing their recyclables. The Transfer Station staff are now enforcing two-stage separation for recyclables to prevent residents from accessing the containers from within the recycling shed.
- The Town could purchase roll-off covers to reduce resident access to the recyclable containers; the cost would be approximately \$5,000 for the Town.
- Discussed conceptual construction options to cover the recyclables containers and reduce access from the rear of the facility. No decisions were made.
- Configuration of security cameras to reduce improper disposal and increase visibility.
- The light in the used oil shed at the Highway Department is not sufficient and needs to be replaced.
- Tom requested information on the tonnage of recyclables to share with residents to help them understand the cost savings through recycling.

Police Chief Bret Sullivan met with the Selectmen to continue their March 9, 2021 discussion of a complaint received from a resident. At 6:43 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 Police Chief Bret Sullivan and Town Administrator Kristie LaPlante. Chief Sullivan reported to the Board the results of his internal inquiry with the Officer. The group discussed the initial complaint, the Chief's report, and how perception can sometimes be more damaging than reality. No decisions were made and the Selectmen closed their inquiry in to the complaint. All voted to reconvene the Public Session at 6:52 p.m.

Matthew Blanchard met with the Board to discuss the Board's March 9th decision to appoint Matt as pro-tem Road Agent. The Selectmen and Matt discussed the following:

- Highway Department employee Chris Davies has delivered his verbal resignation effective April 2, 2021. The Selectmen will advertise for one Laborer/Equipment Operator position.
- Matt will get pictures of the dump body taken from the 2007 International to advertise for sale.
- The Selectmen will contract vehicle/equipment repairs to a mechanic; the Highway Department will perform routine maintenance.

- The gate at the entrance to the property has been broken and needs repair; Matt will complete the repair as soon as feasible.
- An electrician has looked at the lighting in the used oil shed and recommends installation of a plug-in LED light rather than additional of a light socket, which would require extensive wiring.

Selectman Jim Cleary announced to Matt that the Board has appointed him to the Road Agent position with a six-month probationary period. The Selectmen will evaluate Matt's performance after two months and again at six months before making a permanent appointment. Town Administrator Kristie LaPlante will contact UNHT2 to get Matt registered for the March 30 and March 31 Culvert Maintainer certification.

The Selectmen reviewed and appointed the following Town Officials:

- Fire Chief – David Foster for one year
- Capital Reserve Funding Committee – James Cleary, Peter Eppig, David Foster, David P. Hardwick, Sr., and David McKenzie, each for one year
- Conservation Commission – the three year term is vacant; the Selectmen tabled appointment pending a recommendation from the Conservation Commission.
- Highway Safety Committee – Bret Sullivan, James Cleary, and Matt Blanchard each for one year
- Newhall Park Board – Brian Whittemore for a three-year term
- Solid Waste Committee –David Parker, Jeffrey Rose, and Matt Blanchard, each for one year

In her capacity of Tax Collector, Kristie LaPlante discussed outstanding Tax Liens with the Board of Selectmen. The Selectmen did not complete the Tax Deed process for the 2016 or 2017 Liens and now 2018 Liens will also come due in 2021. The Selectmen encouraged the Tax Collector to communicate with property owners with multiples years of delinquencies to develop payment plans to prevent the property owners from losing their property for nonpayment of taxes. The requested consultation from Town Counsel on options for Map 21, Lot 13-01.

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

- Reviewed and approved Accounts Payable Registers for March 3 and March 11, 2011 as well as the Payroll Register for March 11, 2021.
- Reviewed and approved the Minutes of the Board's March 9, 2021 meeting.
- Heard a report that a coolant leak was discovered in the 2015 Cruiser similar to the leak that decommissioned the 2013 Cruiser. The vehicle is at Hillsborough Ford being repaired.
- Reviewed and approved a quote from JAY Contracting for plumbing repairs to the public bathroom. Reviewed and approved a second quote from JAY Contracting for installation of a sign kiosk at Town Hall. Selectman Jim Cleary will confirm placement of a second sign kiosk at the Transfer Station.
- Heard report from the Town Administrator that the American Rescue Plan Act signed by President Biden on March 11, 2021, will provide the Town of Bennington \$150,000 in funding. The current funding guidance is ambiguous and there is no clear timeframe on fund disbursements.
- Reviewed and approved Intents to Cut for Map 16, Lot 02 and for multiple properties owned by Forever Forestlands, LLC.
- Reviewed and signed a Building Permit for Map 09, Lot 04.
- Signed two Timber Tax Warrants (Operation 20-041-03 and 20-041-04).

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristie LaPlante, Town Administrator