

Village of Old Bennington  
Trustees Meeting Minutes  
May 1, 2018

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Officials present: Trustees Andy Buchsbaum, Susan Wright, and Ron Rabidou as well as Treasurer Kathy Wagenknecht and Moderator Pat Winburn.

Officials absent: Trustee Charles Edson and Clerk Donna Berry

Residents present: Megan Schwarzkopf, Jim Warren.

**1. Opening.**

Ron Rabidou, acting as the presiding officer, called the meeting to order at 7:02. In the absence of the clerk, Ron also volunteered to act as clerk for the meeting.

**2. Minutes.**

There were no changes to the previously distributed draft copy of the minutes. Andy Buchsbaum moved that the trustees approve the minutes of the April 3, 2018 meeting, Susan Wright seconded the motion, and the trustees unanimously approved the motion.

**3. Citizen Comments.**

Ron noted a story on the Vermont Public Radio website that indicated the Village ranked eighteenth in the state in terms of ticket revenue (\$24,869) and fourth in terms of ticket revenue per person (\$179). Mount Tabor ranked first in ticket revenue per person (\$514).

**4. Annual Meeting Preparation.**

- a. In preparation for the Annual Meeting, we reviewed the order of business, the nominations for open positions, the PowerPoint slideshow, and the responsibility for various tasks during the meeting as well as how Pat plans on handling the discussion of the sidewalk proposal.
- b. We also discussed how we plan to fill the open clerk position at both the Annual Meeting and for the next year in the absence of a volunteer to fill the role. Ron will be prepared to discuss the clerk's duties if there are questions from the floor.
- c. We decided not to offer refreshments at this year's meeting.

**5. Reports of Commissioners.**

- a. Road Commissioner.
  - i. Andy met with a representative from the state on the potential swale reconstruction on the north side on Bank Street.
    1. It turns out that Bank Street is not a hydrologically connected roadway. Therefore, the representative said it was unlikely we'd

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- qualify for funding. Andy will explore other options and will attempt to get an idea of the cost from Jerome Construction.
2. He also discussed the responsibility for repairing culverts in connection with reconstructing the swale. Andy spoke with R. J. Joly, the town Public Works Director, who indicated that the town requires homeowners to pay for materials and the town provides the labor for installation.
- ii. Andy will arrange with a contractor, likely Beaudoin Paving, to fix pot holes on village roads.
  - iii. We discussed the No Through Trucks sign at the corner of Elm Street and Monument Avenue.
    1. We agreed that the sign was superfluous at this location and discussed other options for placing one or more signs.
    2. We decided to remove the sign at the corner of Elm Street and Monument Avenue and not place any other signs at this time.
  - iv. Jim Warren expressed concern about the visibility of the yield sign in front of the Old First Church. We'll look at the sign and decide if any action needs to be taken at our next meeting.
- b. Police Commissioner.
- i. In the absence of the Police Commissioner, Ron reported that we had received a Memorandum of Understanding from the Bennington Police Department covering our Local Emergency Operation Plan previously submitted to the State of Vermont. We need to reenter this agreement each year.
  - ii. Ron moved to allow Andy, as assistant presiding officer, to sign the MOU, Susan seconded the motion, and the trustees voted unanimously to approve the motion.
- c. Parks Commissioner.
- i. Susan noted that Pembroke had started with the spring cleanup.
  - ii. She said that she would like to have more to do with coordinating the cleanup. Andy agreed and said that he will send her our contract with Pembroke.
- d. Tree Commissioner.
- i. Ron said we're waiting for approval of the budget at the Annual Meeting before planting trees at 10 Monument Avenue (Farren) and 120 Monument Avenue (Mazzola). Jim Warren questioned why we plan to plant sugar maples when they haven't done well in some locations in the past. Ron explained that Ron Pembroke recommended the sugar maple

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based on his assessment of the Farren location. Ron said he would follow-up with Pembroke about Jim's view.

- ii. Ron reported that John and Deborah Williams asked the trustees to replace the tree they removed last year at our request. Given budget considerations, we decided to put this on the list for next year.
- iii. Ron said that he and Megan Schwarzkopf started a survey of trees on the village greens and Monument Ave.
  - 1. There are numerous trees that need pruning or, possibly, replacement.
  - 2. If we want to properly maintain these trees, it will likely be a significant expense going forward. We discussed possible funding sources for tree planting and maintenance. Susan agreed to contact the group that performed the work around the marker on the village green to see if they have any programs involving tree maintenance.
  - 3. Megan Schwarzkopf suggested that we pay more attention to pruning young trees as well as the aesthetics of where we plant and how we maintain trees.
  - 4. We discussed the process for getting residents to remove or maintain diseased trees in the right of way or in their front yards that may represent hazards to pedestrians or vehicles in the public way. We agreed we would continue to make requests informally but that we should notify residents in writing when less formal communications prove unsuccessful.
- e. Treasurer.
  - i. Kathy reviewed expenses for the month.
  - ii. In response to a phone call from Planning Board Chair Bob Bullington, Ron said that he told Bob that he should approve any invoices submitted by Administrative Officer Dennis McCarthy before sending them to Kathy.
  - iii. Kathy presented the warrant list.
  - iv. In response to Andy's question, Kathy explained how the sidewalk project will affect our reserves.
  - v. Ron moved to approve the treasurer's report and the warrant list, Andy seconded the motion, and the trustees unanimously approved the motion.

**6. Old Business.**

- a. Ron said that at our June meeting we'll need to reappoint people for positions on the planning and zoning boards.

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- b. Kathy suggested that we do something to honor Donna Berry. We agreed but decided we needed to learn more about her situation before making any plans. We discussed our lack of success in contacting Donna over the last several months, despite numerous efforts.
- c. We also will need to contact Donna to arrange the transfer of records to the new clerk.

7. **New Business.**

None.

8. **Adjournment.**

Ron moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:42, Andy seconded the motion, and the trustees unanimously approved the motion.

DRAFT