

Village of Old Bennington  
Trustees Meeting Minutes  
April 6, 20201

Meeting held via telepresence using Zoom.com

Officials present: Trustees Susan Wright, Jim Warren, Ron Rabidou, Steven Anisman, and Charles Edson, as well as Clerk James Gallen and Treasurer Kathy Wagenknecht

Officials absent: None

Residents Present: Ed Woods, Margaret Schwarzkopf

1. Opening. Ron Rabidou called the meeting to order at 7:01.
  
2. Approval of minutes.
  - a. There were no changes to the posted minutes.
  - b. Jim moved to approve the posted minutes for the March Trustees meeting. Susan seconded the motion, and the Trustees unanimously approved the motion.
  
3. Citizen comments.
  - a. No comments were made.
  
4. Reports of commissioners and officers.
  - a. Road Commissioner.
    - i. A resident expressed concern about a clogged storm drain on Elm Street. Since it has been several years since we last cleaned the storm drains, the trustees authorized the road commissioner to engage a contractor to clear the drains. Based on past experience, it will likely cost several thousand dollars.
    - ii. Another resident raised the concern about whether Monument Circle should be one way or not. We have discussed this matter extensively in the past and rejected making Monument Circle one way because of the difficulties it would create for tour busses and concerns of Monument Circle residents. Further, there does not appear to be a clear benefit for making the circle one way. The road commissioner will convey our position to the resident.
  - b. Tree Commissioner.
    - i. Ron and Steven have been having active conversations with Green Mountain Power about tree pruning or removal. Green Mountain Power has assured the village that they will try to have the minimal impact possible on the vegetation that is on GMP's right of way. Residents should contact Green Mountain Power if they have any specific concerns.
    - ii. A request to place a hedge was granted for the Buonanno's house. There were two

more requests placed for the removal of some rotten maples on the east side of Monument Avenue. John Runette will be planting a hedge line along his property edge at 110 Monument Avenue, with the provision that it will not inhibit visibility to drivers approaching that corner. s that would not impact visibility.

c. Parks and Sidewalks Commissioner.

i. A proposal from Pembroke Landscaping was received in early March. The costs will be about the same as last year.

ii. A streetlight near the Caswell's property has been reported out.

d. Police Commissioner.

i. Officer Corey worked 81 hours. He conducted 35 property checks. He issued 14 tickets worth about \$2143.

ii. The police car is in good shape. It should last another year or two.

iii. Charles Edson will not be running for reelection.

iv. Charles will have the police records ready in June.

e. Treasurer.

i. One of Jerome's invoices from February was not received. It was for \$3,000.

ii. The outstanding property tax is still being collected. A family member has offered to pay the tax within the next few months.

iii. A discussion was had about the listing of grant money as income to the village.

5. Warrants.

a. Steven moved to approve the warrants. Susan seconded the motion and the Trustees unanimously approved the motion.

6. Annual Meeting/ Election Planning

a. Prepare Budget.

i. The zoning budget went up quite a bit because of the addition of the Administrative Officer. The requests for permits have gone up dramatically over the past year.

ii. The Bank Street Repair Project will only go ahead this year if a grant from the state is awarded. If it's not awarded, the project will not begin this year.

iii. The highway tax rate for the village will be set to match the town of Bennington's highway tax rate.

iv. If a grant from the state is awarded, our share will be funded by the \$35,000 from the increased tax rate and drawing down the reserve by about \$30,000. \$65,000 would go into a reserve account for the Bank Street project, awaiting the grant from the state.

b. Draft Ballot.

- c. Draft Warning.
- d. Nominations.
  - i. Ed Wood has volunteered to be a trustee.
  - ii. James Gallen has also volunteered to be a trustee.
  - iii. Jan Buonanno has expressed interest in being the town clerk. She will not start until the summer.
- e. Timeline/ Responsibilities Review
  - i. As soon as the Trustees have the budget and numbers, they will have to finalize the Draft Warning.
  - ii. Next month will have two meetings. A special meeting will be held in place of the usual annual meeting. Then we will have the standard Trustees meeting.
  - iii. The voting day will take place on May 11th.

## 7. Old Business

- a. Donna's bench will be erected this month. A message has been left with the Bennington Banner trying to get media coverage.

## 8. New Business

- a. No new business was discussed.

## 9. Adjourn.

- a. The meeting was adjourned at 8:42.

