

Village of Old Bennington  
Trustees Meetings Minutes  
April 7, 2020

Meeting held via telepresence using Zoom.com

Officials present: Trustees Andy Buchsbaum, Charles Edson, Ron Rabidou, Jim Warren, and Susan Wright, as well as Clerk Steven Anisman and Treasurer Kathy Wagenknecht. Planning Commission Presiding Officer Bob Bullington attended the Special Meeting.

Officials absent: Susan Wright attended the Trustees Meeting but not the Zoning Meeting. Residents present: Lucy Baldwin and Pat and Kim Winburn attended both the Zoning and Trustees Meetings.

### Special Meeting

A Special Zoning Commission Meeting was held prior to the Trustees Meeting, and led by Bob Bullington, Chair of the Zoning Commission. The meeting was called to order at 6:37pm. The Trustees discussed the revised Zoning Bylaw and the Subdivision Bylaw. Bob Bullington was available for questions. The revisions have been submitted to the Planning Commission and there were no concerns. The current revision is based on the 1999 bylaws. The Subdivision Bylaw is now linked to the Zoning Bylaw to maintain the concept of a development envelope, in order to reduce the piecemeal submissions that have been submitted in the past. The intent is that if subdivision without development is planned, the Commission will include plans regarding where the building envelope should be; these plans will be relevant for disclosure when selling a property. Other changes are meant to conform to the new document organizational structure. Specific changes include: 1) Residents can no longer cut down shrubbery that shields the view of a neighbor. 2) The commission will consider the visibility of where buildings will be placed. 3) Topography will be considered regarding the placement of a site. Approval will be sent to BCRC for their records. Charles Edson moved to accept the amended bylaws. Andy Buchsbaum seconded it. The Trustees unanimously approved the motion. Andy Buchsbaum moved to end the Zoning Meeting, the motion was seconded by Ron Rabidou, the Trustees unanimously approved the motion, and the meeting adjourned at 6:48pm.

### Regular Meeting

1. Opening. Ron Rabidou called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.
2. Minutes.
  - a. There were no changes to the posted minutes.
  - b. Andy Buchsbaum moved to approve the posted minutes for the March 3 Trustees meeting, Jim Warren seconded the motion, and the Trustees unanimously approved the motion.
3. Citizen Comments. There were none.
4. Reports of Commissioners.
  - a. Road Commissioner.

- i. Andy Buchsbaum presented the report. He had heard from the Vermont District Manager regarding the proposed submission for Bank Street – due to COVID 19 issues it was reviewed for completion only, but the state will not be doing anything with it for the moment. \$175k was requested out of a \$250k project, keeping us below the 80% threshold.
  - ii. The phase 2 sidewalk project was discussed with Jamie Jerome; his work is suspended due to COVID 19 as it is not considered an essential service. Andy Buchsbaum called the state and was able to confirm that the monies are still there, although a site visit by the archeological and historic group is needed, and that is on hold; no construction can occur until that review is completed, which will delay the project, and hopefully Jerome will be ready to work at that point.
  - iii. Cold patching was done on Fairview Street, which is a temporary fix; hot patching may be necessary in the future when people are working again.
- b. Tree Commissioner. Jim Warren noted no changes since the last meeting.
- c. Parks and Sidewalks Commissioner.
- i. Susan Wright presented the report. Daffodils are coming up around the marker. There is optimism regarding the tulips, although deer &/or other animals may have been snacking on them.
  - ii. Donna's bench was discussed, and \$900 is needed for the purchase, which we had expected to approve at the Annual Meeting – that meeting is likely to be postponed, which will make fundraising difficult. Charles Edson would like the bench to be ordered and installed as soon as possible, and he is willing to temporarily allocate funds from the police fund, with the hope of reimbursing the fund from future donations from the citizens at an Annual Meeting. A plaque is also being considered. The ground may need to be prepared.
  - iii. Susan Wright discussed the possibility of hiring a stone mason regarding re-setting the stones around the monument, and possibly installing a pad for Donna's bench. The mason will be inspecting the site prior to the next meeting. The other Trustees noted that a stone mason can be expensive, and the specific site for the bench needs to be clarified. A quote will be obtained from the stone mason and reviewed at the next Trustees Meeting. There is not yet a budget for the next fiscal year; some degree of latitude will be needed in planning for the future given the possible delay of the Annual Meeting. One goal is to get the bench installed before the end of the summer.
- d. Police Commissioner. Charles Edson presented the report. Officer Andy Corey worked 92 hours. 6 tickets were issued worth \$1,074 of fines, and 39 property checks/ watches were performed. Due to COVID 19, more warnings are being issued rather than tickets in order to minimize exposure. He has agreed to increase visibility as a consequence. Steven Anisman mentioned that he has seen a number of visitors to the Monument who park in visitor parking and then relieve themselves along the shrub lines; Charles Edson agreed to pass along this concern to the police department.
- e. Treasurer.
- i. Multiple expenses were paid, details are in the Treasurer's Report, which is the final report for the fiscal year.
  - ii. \$2,056 came in from highway funds.
  - iii. Highway maintenance for February (salt, plowing, sand) was \$9,306.43. We are approximately \$14,000 over budget on snow removal, and ~\$11,000 overall, both of which are better than prior projections.

- iv. Current balance in the bank account is \$251,037.50, which is equivalent to the reserve.
  - v. Two properties are past due on property taxes and interest; one has been delinquent for two years, the other one year.
  - vi. Kathy Wagenknecht presented the warrant list. Charles Edson moved to approve the warrant list, Ron Rabidou seconded the motion, and the Trustees unanimously approved the motion.
5. Check signing still requires three signatures unless the bylaws are changed, which would require a 60 day delay; three signatures will remain the current process. Ron Rabidou will sign the checks, then will pass the checks to Andy Buchsbaum, who will pass them to Jim Warren, who will then mail them and return supporting documents to Kathy Wagenknecht. In the future, the check process may need to be revisited, as it adds complexity without benefit. Charles Edson reviewed that in the past, money became hard to track when only one signature was needed. Kathy Wagenknecht and Ron Rabidou will prepare a motion to consider at the next meeting.
6. Annual Meeting Planning. The Secretary of the State of the State of VT has indicated that Annual Meetings can/should be postponed while movement restrictions are in place. Pat Winburn recommended scheduling the meeting at the original date, with acknowledgment that it may need to be postponed. Kathy mentioned that there is a whole series of preparatory activities that need to be performed prior to a meeting, and therefore as much advance notice as possible should be pursued. The Trustees felt that postponing the meeting was reasonable given the low likelihood of large meetings in the second week of May and the difficulty of large meetings via Zoom. Ron Rabidou moved as follows: "I move that we postpone the Annual Meeting until such time as the governor or secretary of state deem it safe to resume holding large public gatherings. At that time, we will hold the meeting as soon as practicable given reporting and notification requirements for annual meetings and elections. In the interim, we will continue to incur and pay routine expenses as well as any additional expenses required to maintain the safety of the village. As specified by state law, all existing officials may continue to serve until their successors are elected at the Annual Meeting." Charles seconded the motion and the Trustees unanimously approved the motion. There are some limitations regarding projects that can be planned without approval by the Village at an Annual Meeting, particularly impacting the Bank Street project. However, that project depends first on a response from the State, which is delayed itself, making this largely irrelevant. Current spending levels will be maintained until the Annual Meeting can be held and a formal budget approved by the citizens of the Village.
7. Old Business. There was none.
8. New Business. There was none.
9. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 7:58pm.