

Village of Old Bennington
Trustees Meeting Minutes
January 7, 2020

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

Officials absent: Andy Buchsbaum

Residents present: none

1. Opening. Ron Rabidou called the meeting to order at 7:04pm.
2. Minutes.
 - a. There were no changes to the minutes. The agenda was corrected to mention a tree on the corner of Fairview and Walloomsac (not Monument and Fairview).
 - b. Charles Edson moved to approve the draft minutes for the December 3 trustees meeting, Susan Wright seconded the motion, and the trustees unanimously approved the motion.
3. Citizen Comments. Megan Schwarzkopf had e-mailed Andy Buchsbaum: Megan reviewed her preference that she be present when the sidewalk in front of her house is addressed, and that the roots of her trees be taken into consideration. Jerome is planning to do the work in a way that prioritizes the weather and gives as much time as possible for grass to lay in; they recommend that we advise the Schwarzkopfs of the time the work is planned so they can be present. The trustees are hoping that the Schwarzkopfs will discuss their concerns with Jerome prior to leaving for the season. The matching grant from the state requires consultation with an arborist as part of the project design, which will consider the impact of the sidewalk on nearby trees.
4. Reports of Commissioners.
 - a. Road Commissioner.
 - i. Andy Buchsbaum was not present. Ron Rabidou mentioned on Andy's behalf that there are sizable potholes around the Village, particularly on Bank St, that had been noticed by Officer Andy Corey. Cold patching will be performed by Beaudoin when weather conditions permit.
 - ii. Jim Warren mentioned that plowing and salting were happening frequently, including on days that it does not appear necessary. \$11,802 has already been paid for a single (although quite extensive) snowstorm in December, with an additional \$8,400 for a second storm - this represents half of the annual budget for snow management. Options include setting specific guidelines for Jerome to follow (such as to only plow when the town is plowing), but historically Jerome has been given latitude to determine when it is appropriate to deal with the roads. Other trustees have noted that the Village often has clearer roads than the Town, which is appreciated although the cost is a concern. Some trustees felt putting the job back up for bid is reasonable after 2-3 years with Jerome. Plowing the sidewalks only after a storm is complete (rather than multiple times during a storm) seemed to be a reasonable request. It is unclear how our cost per mile compares to the Town's cost. The trustees will develop guidelines, and will consider a bidding

process for the next season. In the past, Pembroke has offered a flat rate, which may be worth re-considering.

- iii. The grant applications for the road work on Bank St will be due April 15th - those materials become available in mid-January.

b. Tree Commissioner.

- i. Jim Warren reviewed the progress regarding the dead tree in the right of way on the corner of Walloomsac and Fairview. A letter was sent by the owner indicating that Green Mountain Power plans to clear the tree, or at least the branches near power lines, within the next six months. The experience of some trustees is that the power company has indicated they have had trees "on the list" for 18 months or longer, and six months may be overly optimistic. The owner indicated that the tree was dead when they bought the property, although the trustees pointed out it was not noticed to be dead until recently, and that, regardless, she is now the owner of the dead tree. The consensus is that the current owner is responsible for handling the issue, as other residents have been held to a similar high standard in the past. The tree does pose a potential risk to the roads. The trustees are willing to defer further action immediately, and to wait six months, after which the tree will be taken down the Village and the resident billed. Jim Warren will send a reminder in 5 months to notify them of the pending deadline.
- ii. Greater Heights removed the dying tree on the Village Green. The bill has not yet been received.

c. Parks and Sidewalks Commissioner.

- i. Susan Wright mentioned a light bulb on Monument Avenue was replaced. The broken lamp will be repaired by the contracting company that broke it, although that may wait until spring.

d. Police Commissioner.

- i. Charles Edson presented the report. Officer Andy Corey worked 77 hours. 7 tickets were issued worth \$1,256 of fines, 45 property checks/watches were performed. The police car is now needing more repairs at age 11.

e. Treasurer.

- i. Multiple expenses were paid, details are in the Treasurer's Report.
- ii. A duplicate bill was paid, which was then considerably voided by the recipient; this improves the Village's income statement regarding automotive expenses.
- iii. Expenses for required zoning advertising are being paid to newspapers; those expenses are considerable this year.
- iv. Kathy Wagenknecht presented the warrant list. Jim Warren moved to approve the warrant list, Susan Wright seconded the motion, and the trustees unanimously approved the motion.

5. Planning Commission

- a. Bob Bullington has requested that we address any questions to him regarding the new draft of the bylaws. A special meeting will be necessary on the proposed revisions. We may aim to combine that meeting with the Annual Village Meeting to save on advertising expenses. A summary of changes, in layman's terms, would be helpful for those who were not part of the revision process - otherwise the changes appear very extensive and are difficult to track. Efforts by others to summarize those changes have been unsuccessful, due to the extensive nature of the changes.

b. Bob Bullington has agreed to handle the responsibilities of the zoning administrator until a new one can be hired.

6. Old Business.

a. Pat Winburn sent a letter wondering if the bylaws will be printed and distributed. The website was intended to be the mechanism by which the most current version should be available to everyone.

b. There is no progress on the bench. Despite Susan Wright's initial enthusiasm, there have been no efforts at fundraising yet. The cost would be \$800-1000. The Village would be willing to match up to \$500 if others can raise the first \$500.

7. New Business. There was none.

8. Adjournment. Susan Wright moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:08 pm, Jim Warren seconded the motion, and the trustees unanimously approved the motion.