

Village of Old Bennington  
Trustees Meetings Minutes  
June 2, 2020

Meeting held via telepresence using Zoom.com

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

Officials absent: Andy Buchsbaum, Charles Edson.

Residents present: Margaret Schwarzkopf.

1. Opening. Ron Rabidou called the meeting to order at 7:03pm.
2. Minutes.
  - a. There were no changes to the posted minutes.
  - b. Ron Rabidou moved to approve the posted minutes for the May 5 Trustees meeting, Jim Warren seconded the motion, and the Trustees unanimously approved the motion.
3. Citizen Comments. Megan Schwarzkopf mentioned a safety issue: There is excess vegetation on the Caswell property on the corner of West Road and Monument Avenue; the vegetation is forcing pedestrians off of the sidewalk. Jim agreed to mention it to Rick Caswell on Susan Wright's behalf. Megan Schwarzkopf also asked for an update on the sidewalk project, which is postponed due to the state being backed up from coronavirus-related concerns; they are required to complete an archeological survey before work can begin.
  - After the meeting, Andy Buchsbaum indicated that the State had completed the survey, and they expect to issue a go-ahead for the project soon. Andy contacted Jerome Construction so they will be ready to start once the go-ahead is received.
4. Reports of Commissioners.
  - a. Road Commissioner.
    - i. Andy Buchsbaum was not present. Ron Rabidou mentioned the potholes on Fairview Street, which seem to have re-appeared after recent cold-patching. He will discuss with Andy Buchsbaum to see if those can be redone with a hot mix.
      - After the meeting, Andy Buchsbaum indicated that he had contacted Beaudoin Paving to hot-patch the potholes.
    - ii. There is no further progress on any other projects at the current time due to coronavirus-related delays.
      - After the meeting, Andy Buchsbaum indicated that he would check in with Chris Taft at VTrans District 1 for an update regarding the status of our grant application.
    - iii. Susan Wright noted the orange markers along Monument Avenue, which make it difficult to mow; we suspect those are related to the Verizon fiberoptic project. Nobody had information on the timing or the scope of the project.
  - b. Tree Commissioner.
    - i. Jim Warren presented the report. He had received a response from the Green Mountain Power Vegetation Management Team regarding the trees at the corner

of Walloomsac and Fairview; we await additional information regarding their plans. Multiple neighbors have expressed concern. The property owner has been contacted; she believes the electric company is going to take care of it. It will be placed back on the agenda for next month.

- ii. There is a tree on James Gallen's property, south of the driveway, a large piece of which has broken off into a neighboring tree. Steve's Supreme Tree Service was recommended; some of the Trustees have had good experiences with them.
- iii. The stumps remain in the center island; to grind them would cost between \$750 and \$800 based on received quotes. We await an additional quote. This cost may be prohibitive until voters approve it as part of the fiscal year 2021 budget.

c. Parks and Sidewalks Commissioner.

- i. Susan Wright presented the report. Donna's bench was discussed, which will arrive tomorrow 6/3. Susan will house it in her garage until the site is prepared. There is \$1,185 pledged so far. Susan expects additional pledges, and she anticipates that the total will be reached, which is in the range of approximately \$1,700. If the total is reached, a bronze marker will be ordered.
- ii. Some marble has been located in Arlington, and more in North Bennington, although nobody has had success finding any that is available. Jim Warren and Kathy Wagenknecht are helping to look for sources of marble for projects involving the Village islands. Susan Wright will also check with the stone mason to look for other possible sources. The stone mason may also be able to help in levelling Arnold Ricks' bench. It may need a more secure footing; Susan Wright will check on the possible cost.

d. Police Commissioner. Charles Edson was not present. There is concern that ticket income is down, although it appears that Officer Andy Corey is actively protecting the streets.

e. Treasurer.

- i. Multiple expenses were paid, details are in the Treasurer's Report.
- ii. 4 checks were written, the largest of which was for Pembroke's spring cleanup, a little more than \$10,000.
- iii. Tzaims Luskus remains in Myanmar.
- iv. \$500 was received for permit fees.
- v. The checking account continues to collect interest at a rate higher than some of the CDs.
- vi. Without a budget yet approved, accounting continues in keeping with last year's actual spending.
- vii. Kathy Wagenknecht presented the warrant list. Ron Rabidou moved to approve the warrant list, Susan Wright seconded the motion, and the Trustees unanimously approved the motion.

5. Annual Meeting Planning. An in-person annual meeting is beginning to seem unlikely any time soon. In order to get the process started, the ballots may be mailed out with mail-in voting; we will need to follow rules and regulations as specified by the State of Vermont. It would need to include an informational attachment. The August meeting could be an informational session (most likely online), with an election day later that month. Information could also be published on the website. There was some concern that some residents would be uncomfortable with Zoom, although it was pointed out that more and more public and private business is being done using this modality. An alternative would

be a meeting at the Bennington Museum, or outside at the Monument, which might allow spacing that would be safer in-person. In order for this timeline to be met, the Annual Report and the budget need to be finalized and distributed; the budget will be finalized at the July meeting, with the Annual report finalized in August. There are some major issues that will need discussion, particularly the Bank St renovation; this may require that the work be postponed until next year to allow in-person conversation, as some debate is expected.

6. Old Business. There was none.

7. New Business. Bob Bullington mentioned that Mary Lou Chicotte at the Monument wondered if the Village has a face-mask policy, as the town does. It was felt that we are subject to the town bylaws unless we adopt a contravening bylaw (such as has been done regarding zoning, or subdivision, or roads). Therefore, the town's face-mask policy should be enforced within the Village. There was no objection. The restrictions at the Monument are more restrictive than those in the town, which provides additional safety; the Trustees felt that there was no need to introduce additional changes.

8. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 7:51pm.