

Village of Old Bennington
Trustees Meeting Minutes
March 3, 2020

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

Officials absent: none

Residents present: none

1. Opening. Ron Rabidou called the meeting to order at 7:02pm.
2. Minutes.
 - a. There were no changes to the posted minutes.
 - b. Andy Buchsbaum moved to approve the posted minutes for the February 4 Trustees Meeting, Jim Warren seconded the motion, and the Trustees unanimously approved the motion.
3. Citizen Comments. Marian Peters had sent an e-mail to Ron Rabidou in which she invited the Trustees to meet with the new director of the Bennington Museum. After discussion, the Trustees decided to instead invite him to meet all the members of the Village at the Annual Meeting.
4. Reports of Commissioners.
 - a. Road Commissioner.
 - i. Andy Buchsbaum presented the report. He continues to work on the grant application for the Bank Street reconstruction project. There was a meeting with Chris Taft, the VTrans District 1 state project manager, which included Ron Rabidou and Andy Buchsbaum. There is some paperwork that needs to be completed by the Trustees in order to maximize the potential state contribution. These would include adopting a number of state standards and guidelines for new construction. There are some culverts that have been crushed, and the question arose as to who would bear the costs of repairs to private property. The Trustees decided on a general principle in which during construction by the any repairs to private property that arise from that construction will be paid by the Village as part of the project. If homeowners independently decided to repair culverts on their property separate from a Village project, however, those expenses would be borne by the homeowner. In this circumstance, the Village will pay to repair the culverts as part of the Bank St project. Additionally, the Trustees were pleased to learn that some of the project expenses will be covered by the state (such as coring samples and other services that they routinely provide to municipalities). Chris Taft of VTrans also incidentally mentioned that he coordinates a snowplowing service for various municipalities, and he offered to help us write and bid out a contract.
 - ii. Andy Buchsbaum and Ron Rabidou were optimistic that the chances of receiving a state grant were good. Results may not be available by the time of the Annual Meeting. Methods of payment (from reserves or a bond, for example) will need to be discussed with residents of the Village at the Annual Meeting, with provisional

plans to allow an appropriate response, depending on the ultimate disposition by the state.

- iii. Regarding the sidewalk project, there is steady progress in the planning phase. It should begin on time. Andy Buchsbaum and Ron Rabidou met with the Schwarzkopfs and with Jamie Jerome. Jerome's plan was acceptable to the Schwarzkopfs; certain standards are being added to the contract regarding driveway crossings; this language will be used for future contracts, as well, for all residents of the Village when feasible.
 - iv. Gorman has given an estimate for crack sealing of ~\$10,000 for 500 gallons of sealant as well as the associated work, which may be adequate to seal the roads, but it is unclear whether more may be necessary. This will be presented within a budget at the Annual Meeting.
 - v. Fairview Road has a pothole which damaged a tire and the alignment of a driver from the Bennington School. She sought payment by the Village, but has not followed-up on her request. In the future, these issues should be pre-reported to our insurance company, and the claimant can then contact the insurance company. A few days prior, Andy Buchsbaum had contacted Bowdoin Paving Company to repair this pothole; hopefully that will be repaired soon. That area of road is in a low spot that is prone to damage and will ultimately need complete repair.
- b. Tree Commissioner. Jim Warren presented the report. Pembroke removed many trees at the Mazzola house; they corrected damaged and invasive trees. This led to a review of the relevant Village guidelines. The bylaws and the zoning regulations do not match - no permit is needed for a right-of-way, but permits are needed elsewhere. This inequality may be corrected in the future; Jim Warren will discuss the possibility of updating the bylaws with Bob Bullington.
- c. Parks and Sidewalks Commissioner.
- i. Susan Wright presented the report. The streetlight on Walloomsac at the corner of Monument Avenue has been repaired at no expense to the Village, as expected.
 - ii. There has been no progress on collecting funds for a bench for Donna Corey. The Village is willing to match whatever funds can be raised. This will be addressed at the Village Meeting.
 - iii. Pembroke has sent a proposal to maintain the landscape; it was similar to past years. It will be signed if no other bids are needed; provisional acceptance was provided by the Trustees. It appears that rates are unchanged from last year, at \$85 an hour for labor and equipment, an estimated total of \$12k to 16k over the course of a year. It may be time to put this up to bid if required by state laws, potentially for next year. Ron Rabidou will investigate state bidding requirements. The Trustees feel Pembroke has traditionally done an excellent job.
- d. Police Commissioner. Charles Edson presented the report. Officer Andy Corey worked 92 hours. 16 tickets were issued worth \$2,620 of fines, and 54 property checks/watches were performed. There has been an increase in night hours at Charles Edson's request.
- e. Treasurer.
- i. Multiple expenses were paid, details are in the Treasurer's Report.
 - ii. Postage stamps were purchased.
 - iii. There are still properties with outstanding taxes due.

- iv. Kathy Wagenknecht presented the warrant list. Andy Buchsbaum moved to approve the warrant list, Jim Warren seconded the motion, and the Trustees unanimously approved the motion.
5. Annual Meeting Planning
 - a. The annual budget report is being prepared; some line items are currently in estimate form until the end of the fiscal year March 31. Trustees should plan to update their expected budget for the new fiscal year by the next meeting. The budget will then be finalized and will need to be signed off soon after that meeting in order to be sent out to the Village sufficiently prior to the Annual Meeting; it should be posted by May 2 in order to be in compliance with Village bylaws.
 - b. Annual reports should be submitted by April 18 in order to allow sufficient time for review. Notifications regarding the meeting will be sent out via postcard; Ron Rabidou will create and send the postcards, and include a link to the annual report. That report will be posted online, a trend which residents can expect to continue in the future.
 - c. Replacements will need to be found for Road Commissioner and Clerk; Andy Buchsbaum's term is ending, as is Steven Anisman's. Both will seek replacements for their positions; James Gallen had previously indicated a willingness to return to the Clerk position, and a number of possible candidates to become the new Road Commissioner were discussed. Susan Wright is willing to serve again as Parks & Sidewalks Commissioner, Kathy Wagenknecht is willing to serve again as Treasurer, and Jim Warren is willing to serve again as Tree Commissioner.
6. Planning Commission
 - a. A special meeting/hearing for proposed bylaw changes is set for April 7 at 6:30pm, prior to the Trustees Meeting. It mostly applies to subdivisions.
 - b. A new administrative officer is needed. A strong candidate was found but was not interested. Ads are running. Jim Warren is willing to help until a full-time replacement can be found.
 - c. Bob Bullington would like to consider further refinement of the fee schedule to more closely reflect the time needed to manage the work and cover the costs of the Planning Commission.
7. Old Business. There was none.
8. New Business. There was none.
9. Adjournment. Andy Buchsbaum moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 pm, Susan Wright seconded the motion, and the Trustees unanimously approved the motion.