

Village of Old Bennington  
Trustees Special Meeting Minutes  
July 28, 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.

Officials absent: none.

Residents present: Lucy Baldwin, Jill Jones, Ann Kremers, Megan Schwarzkopf, Pat White, and others

1. Opening. Ron Rabidou called the meeting to order at 7:03pm. This meeting is in lieu of the in-person Annual Meeting this year due to the coronavirus pandemic, and is intended to provide voters with the information they will need to evaluate the budget and make an informed vote. Voting will take place on August 11; paper ballots have been sent to all residents and should be mailed in if possible.
2. Reports of Commissioners (details are available in the individual written reports).
  - a. Road Commissioner. Andy Buchsbaum presented the Roads Report. This included reviewing the potential costs of reconstructing and repairing the roads, as summarized in the road report that was distributed in the mail. Regarding the sidewalk repair project, we were able to obtain a VTrans grant, which covers \$35,000 of the projected \$70,000 total. That project's start has been delayed, waiting for Jamie Jerome to be available. Bank St is the highest priority for road repair; we have reclassified the road as a Class 2 road, which enables us to obtain grants; we are awaiting a response. This response, like many projects, has been delayed due to the coronavirus epidemic, although there is reason for optimism based on early responses by the state. There are many potential road projects that will require the attention of the Village in the coming years, as outlined in the MSK report. The unlikely upper limit of all projects combined, over multiple years, is a total of \$1.5 million. Crack sealing maintenance should proceed while final decisions are made, in order to minimize further road deterioration.
  - b. Parks and Sidewalks Commissioner. Susan Wright presented the report. The Village parks are well maintained by Pembroke Landscaping. The Old First Church marker garden is in good shape. The marble paving stones in the central island should be given attention someday if the funds can be raised (likely cost is \$4,000, beyond the Parks budget). Donna Barry's commemorative bench is moving forward – the bench and the site are ready to go, and the plaque should be available soon.
  - c. Police Commissioner. Charles Edson presented the report. Officer Andy Corey and Chief Doucette were thanked. Charles Edson recommended that residents keep houses and garages locked. Obey the speed limit and set an example. Officer Corey is available for house checks if residents are away.
  - d. Tree Commissioner. Jim Warren presented the report. It was a relatively quiet year. The tree on the corner of Fairview and Walloomsac is about to come down. The coming year should focus on clearing trees in the central islands.
  - e. Treasurer.

- i. Kathy Wagenknecht presented the report. Income was \$140,966. Expenses were \$152,058; the majority of the overage was due to a large number of snows and plowing expenses, which will be reflected in next year's budget. The General Reserve was drawn down by about \$11,000 to cover the difference.
- ii. The proposed budget includes no change in the tax rate, meaning income should largely be the same. Expenses will be increased \$8,262 to cover a more realistic approach to snowplowing. Reserves will draw down an additional \$18k.

3. Resident Questions / Comments. There were none.

4. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 7:30pm.