

Village of Old Bennington  
Annual Meeting Minutes  
May 14, 2019

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**Officials present:** Trustees Andy Buchsbaum, Susan Wright, Charles Edson, Jim Warren, and Ron Rabidou as well as Treasurer Kathy Wagenknecht, Clerk James Gallen, and Moderator Pat Winburn.

**Officials absent:** Auditor Dale Cobb.

1. **Call to Order.**

Pat Winburn called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.

2. **Reading of the Warning.**

Ron Rabidou read the warning.

3. **Introductions.**

- a. The trustees, the treasurer, and the clerk introduced themselves to the residents.
- b. Pat Winburn reminded participants that only qualified voters could vote at the meeting.

4. **New Residents and Deaths in the Village.**

Pat Winburn asked new residents to introduce themselves and asked for reports of any deaths in the village.

5. **Commissioner Reports**

- a. Jim Warren gave the tree commissioner's report noting that he and Megan Schwarzkopf are conducting a survey of the village greens. Megan stressed the need for an increased budget for tree maintenance. Jim is exploring the possibility of finding a firm to offer a discount on tree maintenance to village residents in connection with their responsibility to maintain trees in the public right of way adjacent to their properties.

Martha Kozlosky moved to accept the tree commissioner's report, Marianne Peters seconded the motion, and the voters unanimously approved the motion.

- b. In Dale Cobb's absence, Ron Rabidou read the auditor's report, which stated the village records appeared to be in order and within normal operating procedures.

Steven Anisman moved to accept the auditor's report, Marianne Peters seconded the motion, and the voters unanimously approved the motion.

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- c. Charles Edson gave the police commissioner's report stating that there were no major incidents within the village during the past year. He introduced village police officer Andy Corey and commended him on his service to the village.

Terrell Poeton moved to accept the police commissioner's report, Steven Anisman seconded the motion, and the voters unanimously approved the motion.

- d. Susan Wright gave the parks commissioner's report. She asked for donations and volunteers to maintain the village greens.
  - i. Martha Kozlosky suggested specifying dates when villagers could gather to work on the village greens. Susan said this was a good idea.
  - ii. Charles Kozlosky asked about the functionality of the village fountain. Jim Warren said he was looking into getting the fountain working again.
  - iii. Martha Kozlosky moved to accept the parks commissioner's report, Steven Anisman seconded the motion, and the voters unanimously approved the motion.
- e. Ron Rabidou gave the presiding officer's report.
  - i. Ron discussed the distribution of the annual report including issues related to delivering the report by hand as we did in prior years and the cost of printing and mailing the report as we did this year. He proposed that we send a postcard to residents and voters noting the availability of the report on our village website or by request from the village clerk.
  - ii. Doug Bradshaw suggested that the postcard include information on how residents could obtain the report from the clerk (by mail, email, pickup, etc.). Ron said this information would be in the postcard.
  - iii. Ron read the motion as shown as Item 6 of the Warning.
  - iv. Steven Anisman moved to approve the motion, Marianne Peters seconded the motion, and the voters unanimously approved the motion.
- f. Andy Buchsbaum gave the road commissioner's report.
  - i. Andy explained the proposed survey of village road by MSK engineers that would assess the condition of our roads, estimate the cost of repairs, and recommend a timeline for making the repairs. The cost of the survey is \$5,000. Several residents discussed the pros and cons of conducting a professional survey rather than relying on publicly available resources. Residents also discussed the pros and cons of repairing and replacing sidewalks when the village roads need extensive repairs.

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- ii. Andy noted that we recently completed Phase 1 of the Monument Avenue sidewalk project. We should soon receive reimbursement for 50 percent of the cost as part of a matching grant from the state.
- iii. Andy presented several slides showing the proposed Phase 2 of the sidewalk project. He indicated that we will apply for a matching grant from the state for Phase 2 and that we will not proceed with Phase 2 unless we receive the grant.
- iv. Martha Kozlosky moved to accept the road commissioner's report, Steven Anisman seconded the motion, and the voters unanimously approved the motion.

**6. Treasurer and Tax Collector Reports.**

- a. Kathy Wagenknecht presented the treasurer's report.
  - i. Kathy explained that we had received an additional \$7,700 from the state as part of its PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes) program relating to the state-owned Monument property. We can expect to receive a similar amount in future years.
  - ii. Kathy showed a series of slides outlining the village's revenues, expenses, and fund balances comparing the budgeted and actual amounts for fiscal year 2019.
  - iii. Steven Anisman moved to accept the treasurer's report, Terrell Poeton seconded the motion, and the voters unanimously approved the motion.
- b. Kathy presented the budget for fiscal year 2020.
  - i. Kathy showed a series of slides outlining proposed budgeted revenues, expenses, and fund balances. She explained that the budget included a \$23,000 increase in tax revenues. She also noted that we recently received an estimate for the cost of Phase 2 of the Monument Avenue sidewalk project and, as a result, proposed to increase the budgeted amount for sidewalk repairs from \$30,000 to \$35,000.
  - ii. Robyn Stromgren moved to approve the budget as amended, Charles Edson seconded the motion, and the majority of voters approved the budget.
- c. Kathy presented the tax collectors report.
  - i. She showed slides summarizing the proposed tax rate increase for fiscal 2020, the effect of the increase on property owners, and a comparison showing the tax rate paid by village residents and town residents. She

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explained that even with the increase in the village tax rate, village residents would still have a lower overall tax rate than town residents.

- ii. She proposed a highway tax rate increase of \$.0724 per hundred dollar assessed value to \$.2674 per hundred assessed value. The general tax rate would remain at \$.0400 per hundred dollar assessed value bringing the total village tax rate to \$.3074 per hundred dollar assessed value.
- iii. Doug Bradshaw moved to approve the fiscal year 2020 tax rate, Steven Anisman seconded the motion, and the majority of voters approved the rate.

**7. Election of Officers.**

- a. Pat Winburn asked for the report of the nominating committee. Speaking for the nominating committee, Ron Rabidou read the list of nominees:
  - i. Moderator: Pat Winburn for a term of one year.
  - ii. Clerk: none.
  - iii. Tax collector and treasurer: Kathy Wagenknecht for a term of one year.
  - iv. Auditor: Dale Cobb for a term of one year.
  - v. Two trustees: Ron Rabidou and Charles Edson for terms of two years.
- b. Pat asked for nominations from the floor. There were none.
- c. Ron Rabidou explained that in the absence of a volunteer to serve as clerk, the trustees would hire someone to perform the clerk's tasks under the direction of the trustees.
- d. Terrell Poeton moved to elect Pat Winburn moderator for a term of one year, Bruce Laumeister seconded the motion, and the voters unanimously approved the motion.
- e. Jill Jones moved to elect Kathy Wagenknecht treasurer and tax collector for a term of one year, Marianne Peters seconded the motion, and the voters unanimously approved the motion.
- f. Martha Kozlosky moved to elect Dale Cobb auditor for a term of one year, Marianne Peters seconded the motion, and the voters unanimously approved the motion.
- g. Steven Anisman moved to elect Charles Edson trustee for a term of two years, Susan Wright seconded the motion, and the voters unanimously approved the motion.
- h. Marianne Peters moved to elect Ron Rabidou trustee for a term of two years, [??] seconded the motion, and the voters unanimously approved the motion.

**8. Other business.**

None.

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9. **Adjournment.**

At 8:50 pm Steven Anisman moved to adjourn the meeting, Bruce Laumeister seconded the motion, and the voters unanimously approved the motion.