

Village of Old Bennington
Annual Meeting Minutes
May 9, 2023

Officials Present: Trustees Susan Wright, Jim Warren, Steven Anisman (Zoom), Ed Woods, Anne Slatterly, Clerk Jan Buonanno, Planning board Chair Nancy Coseo, Treasurer Kathy Wagenknecht, Moderator Pat Winburn, Zoom Administrator Thomas Scheetz

1. Come to order. The meeting was called to order at 7:00.
2. Reading of the Warning by Clerk
3. Introductions: New residents Chris Costello, Mark Vaughn, Mary Walsh, Morris Kafka
 - Deaths: Charles & Charlotte Edson, Anne Jensen
4. Reports
 - a. Road
 - Same as always: A lot of money for winter maintenance, roads are falling apart
 - Focus on Fairview repair- have enough in reserves (\$270,000) for replacement but also looking into loans
 - Cooperative agreement with the police department could be a model for road maintenance.
 - Resident comments: Is there political help?, Can the speed limit be lowered?, 'hydrologically connected road' segment has been thoroughly investigated and denied, is there a liability issue with the condition of Fairview?
 - b. Police
 - Officer Corey & cruiser retirement
 - Residents can request property check from Bennington Police
 - Planning on fewer hours worked with greater efficiency
 - More detailed reporting & data available
 - Resident comments: speeding on Bank & Catamount, Church St intersection, unlocked car rummaging
 - c. Tree
 - Village is primarily responsible for trees in central islands
 - Clearing around Walloomsac Inn
 - Resident comments: new tree planting program, adopt-a-tree idea for Monument Ave
 - d. Parks
 - Email trustee with streetlight & sidewalk issues
 - Goal of renovating meeting house marker as part of Vermont 250th anniversary committee (\$50-75,000)
 - Resident Comments: bravo for the efforts, condition of marble sidewalks, no Church Lane street light
 - e. Auditor
 - Not present

f. Treasurer

- 2023 Income higher than anticipated (COVID)
- \$42,000 2023 income variance (under budget)-didn't buy police car
- Salt & plowing 50% over budget- cost increases
- \$68,392 transfer to reserves for the year

Motion to accept commissioner's reports: motion passes unanimously.

6. Budget

- No tax increase proposed
- No ARPA or cruiser sale next year
- Hoping to increase highway fines
- See full budget in annual report

Motion to approve the budget and tax rate as presented by the treasurer.

- R Ponvert makes a motion to amend the motion to approve the budget: add \$5,000 to the budget to be used for the planting of future legacy trees throughout the village at the discretion of the trustees.

Discussion:

- Planting in common spaces is a responsibility of trustees written in bylaws.
- Is there a survey?
- inequitable - benefits only some houses
- 25 foot village right-of-way from center of road, but property owners are responsible
- Used to plant in right-of-way but it got expensive
- Trees calm traffic
- Add an opt-in on tax bill to donate

Amendment to the motion is seconded and passes unanimously

Motion to pass budget as amended passes unanimously

7. Motion to see if taxpayers will authorize the trustees to borrow monies in anticipation of taxes. The villagers unanimously approve the motion.

8. Election of officers

- a. Moderator Pat Winburn
 - Motion to approve passes unanimously
- b. Clerk Mary Walsh
 - Motion to approve passes unanimously
- c. Treasurer & Tax Collector Ron Rabidou
 - Motion to approve passes unanimously

- d. Auditor Kathy Wagenecht
 - Motion to approve passes unanimously
- e. Three trustees Susan Wright (2 years)
Ann Slattery (2 year)
Ed Woods (2 years)

Motion to approve slate of trustees candidates passes unanimously

9. Other business to come before the group

- Planning Board:
 - opening on commission for 4 year term-meets as needed, appointed by trustees
 - Walloomsac Inn: temporary fence approval, currently a private residence, permitted work has been performed to preserve structure

10. Motion to adjourn meeting adjourned at 9:02