

Village of Old Bennington  
Special Trustees Meeting Minutes  
March 6, 2023

**Officials Present:** Trustees Jim Warren, Steven Anisman, Anne Slattery, Ed Woods, Susan Wright, Treasurer Kathy Wagenknecht, Clerk Jan Buonanno, Moderator Pat Winburn

**Citizens Present:** Suzanne & Andy Buchsbaum, Renny & Hillary Ponvert, Pat White, Thomas Scheetz, Nancy Coseo & Steve Korn, Nicholas Ratzer (MSK), Lucy Baldwin, Jill & Galen Jones, Bob Bullington

**Opening:** Special Meeting called to order at 7:01pm by Pat Winburn (budgetary meetings require moderator)

**Road Commissioner JW:**

- 2019: MSK Engineering did a survey of Old Bennington roads.
- 2022: Coring samples taken of Fairview & Bank Street.
- 2023: Authorized MSK to survey, create construction documents & put job out to bid for Fairview only(construction could happen any time).

**Nick Ratzer (MSK):**

- *Coring findings:* 7 inches of asphalt on Fairview.
- *Recommendation:* full depth replacement to make a 20-year road
- *Timeline:* Survey will happen at the end of March/early April. Complete set of contract docs by May, out to bid early summer, construction this year.
- *Construction Plan:* Needs to be surveyed to make a complete plan, but likely to dig out 7 inches of asphalt, add 18 to 20 inch processed gravel, and find a good place to divert water.

**Treasurer KW:**

- Using money from reserves requires a public vote because this expense was not approved at the 2022 annual meeting.
- \$333,000 in reserve at the end of the year (March)
- Fairview costs: \$225,000 with 20% contingency (275,000)
- Borrowing from VT Bond Bank might be an option rather than using reserves
- Some other combination of borrowing & reserves possible.

**Discussion:**

**RP:** Are there matching funds from state or federal?

- ARPA money could go toward this (\$20,000)
- Roads have not qualified for grants, funds not granted for various reasons (have applied yearly)

Why are 85 households funding an infrastructure project?

- We own it, villages have to maintain their own roads

**KW:** There is a timing crunch with borrowing- maybe pay for Fairview from reserves, borrow for Bank

**RP:** Reserves could pay for milling for both- How often is patching required currently?  
-constantly

**SA:** Time is of the essence- a decision has to be made today to get this done this year.

**AB:** Has bond form residents been considered?

- Need research/lawyer

### **Motion**

EW makes a motion to engage MSK to pursue replacement of Fairview St using \$270,652.71 to come from reserves. SA seconds.

GJ makes an amendment to the motion to use reserves, but not to exceed 50% of total and borrow the remainder.

The motion does not pass as amended.

### **Discussion**

**AB:** Is fixing potholes and getting financing lined up for next year possible?

**AS:** Trying to solve for a calendar issue rather than the most beneficial to the village plan. Can we have 6 weeks to assess financial alternatives?

**KW:** \$257,000 of reserve is earmarked for road construction- money has been allocated yearly.

**SA:** Not approving this expense is kicking the can, failing at our main job as a village. Continuously not making a decision on this- this time frame is not a rush, been working toward this plan for years.

**RP:** Are reserves required for obtaining a loan?

- loans based on tax base.

**SW:** How does Bennington fund road construction?

- Bonds & taxes

**SA:** Village has been saving this money for years for this purpose. But now we just like to have it.

**GJ:** Does exhausting our reserves make it harder to borrow?

- loans based on taxes base

**RP:** This feels like a rapid decision.

**SW:** This expense has been approved every year in the budget for the reserve

**2nd vote on Motion**

EW makes a motion to engage MSK to pursue replacement of Fairview St using \$270,652.71 to come from reserves. SA seconds.

**Motion passes non-unanimously.**

**Adjournment:** SA makes a motion to adjourn, AB seconds. The meeting was adjourned at 8:08pm.