

**Brandon Select Board Meeting
June 8, 2020**

NOTE: These are unapproved minutes, subject to amendment and/or approval at a subsequent board meeting.

All in Attendance via Zoom.

Board Members In Attendance: Seth Hopkins, Tim Guiles, Tracy Wyman, Brian Coolidge, Doug Bailey

Others In Attendance: Dave Atherton, Barry Varian, Bill Moore, Butch Shaw, Sue Gage, Bernie Carr, Chris Brickell, Sherry Vacarella, Brent Buehler, Riker Wikoff

The meeting was called to order by Seth Hopkins – Chair at 7:00PM.

1. Call to order

a) Agenda Adoption – Motion by Tracy Wyman/Brian Coolidge to adopt the agenda. **The motion passed unanimously.**

2. Approval of Minutes

a) Select Board Meeting – May 25, 2020

b) Public Hearing (BFPL) Minutes – May 25, 2020

Motion by Doug Bailey/Tracy Wyman to approve the minutes of the May 25th Select Board meeting and Public Hearing minutes. **The motion passed unanimously.**

3. Town Manager’s Report

Dave Atherton provided a report for the weeks of May 25th and June 1st, 2020.

Segment 6:

We have completed a sidewalk inspection to determine where repairs will take place. There will be another meeting tomorrow afternoon with the concrete company. There is about 10,000 feet of sidewalk that needs repair. The repairs should be done this week. There will be some clean up and pre-punch list items taken care of.

Park Street:

Sewer services are currently being connected to the new sewer main line and the last portion was done today. They should move on to the water next week. They are a little ahead of schedule and the project is going very well.

Other happenings:

The Churchill Road culvert replacement will start on June 15th. This should be completed by the end of June. They are trying to figure out how to get their crane in the area. Mr. Atherton was informed by Hazard Mitigation that the additional 25% match for the 389 Newton Road buyout will be available. There were two properties that backed out. Mr. Atherton met with Cummings Electric to discuss installation of the electric vehicle charging stations. We are anticipating late summer. Shawn and he have been discussing the possibility of building the parking area in-house. We can use “in-kind” work to meet our grant match amount. The Town is capable of doing the site work and work with the electrical contractor.

Rec Department News:

The Brandon Rec Department is moving out of phase 1 of COVID response and into phase 2. Most on-line activities in which we have been engaging the community (Facebook Bingo, Zoom Trivia, Paint and Sip via Facebook) are ending. We will continue to promote our painting project, will host another on-line fishing derby and our newest patriotic planting pot painting activity is sure to be a hit. We are cautiously moving toward hosting some in-person activities, out of doors. Plans include resuming our summer cornhole league, youth baseball, golf, basketball, and cheerleading clinics. We will likely be having a drive-in concert for our Brandon Idol at either Estabrook or Wyman’s campground. Colleen Wright and Bill Moore are working tirelessly to come up with safe and creative ways to deliver programming to the community.

Seth Hopkins stated it is good news about the in-kind work and the progress with VTrans. Doug Bailey requested a status of the funding for the DPW building that was discussed at the last meeting. Sue Gage reported the Buildings and Grounds budget will be under \$40,000 and the building purchase could come out of that department. Ms. Gage stated for the overall budget, most budgets are under, however, she will need to review the DPW budget as there is some overage for road paving. Dave Atherton stated there is Class 2 funds that will be coming, which is why the road paving budget is currently over. The Highway budget was cut close due to the cost of salt for the winter, which is costly and unpredictable. Shawn and Mr. Atherton have called the vendor on the building, but it will be late summer before anything can be done.

Barry Varian asked if there is a plan to work on the plantings for downtown. Mr. Atherton stated the final plan is not in place yet, but it is hoped to have one soon.

Bernie Carr asked if the West Seminary project will impact Route 7. Mr. Atherton stated if it does, it will be quick with unloading material and there won’t be much traffic stops. West Seminary will be one lane going up with hill, but it will be short for Route 7.

4. Public Comment and Participation

Seth Hopkins acknowledged that Wayne Rausenberger, Brandon Rep to the BLSG, has resigned. Mr. Hopkins would like to thank Mr. Rausenberger for the many years of service to the Town and the Greater Brandon Community working on the BLSG. Mr. Rausenberger is knowledgeable with the funding and the Town appreciates his service. Richard Russ is the current BLSG Rep,

but there is now an opening. If anyone is interested in serving on the BLSG, they can contact the Town Manager.

Doug Bailey asked if there has been feedback on the use of tables on the downtown sidewalks. Dave Atherton advised the Town's picnic tables are being painted and will be placed on the Town property between the tree grades to allow people to use them. There have been no complaints about the tables. Mr. Bailey asked if there is a policy concerning the tables. Mr. Atherton stated it is no different from a park bench. There are no alcohol permits for consumption on the sidewalks. Mr. Bailey is concerned if they are being used by the restaurants that others using the tables will be asked to leave. Mr. Atherton reiterated the tables are no different from park benches and are public property. Mr. Bailey wanted to assure they were there for all, and not just for the restaurants. Mr. Atherton stated anyone else would have to get a permit to put tables out in front of their business. This is only temporary and when things lighten up, they can be moved.

Tim Guiles stated it is appropriate to recognize the huge issue happening in our country. He is looking at two emails, one from the ACLU and noted that systemic racism exists in Vermont. It is not a matter of today, as this has been around for a long time. The other email is from the VLCT that points out that Governor Scott observes that we need to take action to make changes. The other point that the letter makes is to educate yourself about race, as silence is neither an option or strategy and it makes sense to search out anywhere we might have a participation injustice. Mr. Guiles is trying to figure out any way he might be contributing to the problem. He hopes that the Board can work in Brandon to assure that we do not have systemic racism.

Butch Shaw provided an update from Montpelier. Mr. Shaw reported the House passed a quarter year budget that is austere. This is 25% of the budget to understand the COVID money that is coming from the federal government and what our revenue will be. The Transportation budget of 60% will provide funding level to last year. For this year, the Town is okay, but cautioned depending on State revenues, as there is no idea of what is going to happen. The Education Fund is \$156 million in the hole, but steps are being taken and it is likely all reserves in the General Fund will be used to stay afloat. There is no certainty on any State funding. There will be a big chunk coming in from the federal government and that piece is being figured out. Mr. Atherton asked if the State will still move forward with the Structures grants. Mr. Shaw stated the grants in the 2020 budget will be fully funded. There were budget adjustments done to bring it in line and it is still okay, and Mr. Shaw suspects the Structures grants will be okay. Sue Gage asked Mr. Shaw if there is any idea what the Education tax rate will be. Mr. Shaw stated the Yield bill was passed in the House and has moved on to the Senate. All reserves have been used up and the Education Fund is \$156 million in the hole. The Education tax rate will be \$1.54 and \$1.628 for non-residents.

Barry Varian stated the school district's fiscal year is ending with an anticipated \$850,000 surplus, with \$450,000 approved by the Board for Chrome Books with internet hotspots for remote learning. This will also provide a level of control on usage and allows all students to have equitable internet. The \$450,000 may be funded through the CARES Act, which would then roll the entire \$850,000 back to the taxpayers. Butch Shaw thanked Mr. Varian for the information

and noted the Committees are trying to understand what they can do with the CARES funding. Mr. Shaw thanked the school district for the austere budget.

5. Broadband Grant Support Letter

Seth Hopkins stated there is a broadband grant support letter in the Board packet. Bill Moore stated this item had been discussed and he has been working with Representatives Jerome and Shaw to obtain a broadband innovations band. The Rutland Regional Planning Commission is applying for this grant. Pittsford Select Board has provided a letter of support for the grant and suggested this letter of support would be the Town's part in helping to get the broadband innovation. Tim Guiles requested an update on the downtown broadband. Bill Moore stated it is up but does not have a long range. The router will be moved from inside the office to outside to provide a much greater range. There is also another wireless router being provided that will be on the side of the town hall that faces the parking lot behind the Mobil station that will expand the broadband further. Mr. Guiles asked if there is a password for the system and Mr. Moore stated a password is not required. Mr. Guiles asked what the intended range is once the router is outside. Mr. Moore stated it could be 250 meters and would be mostly line of sight.

Motion by Tim Guiles/Doug Bailey to authorize the Board Chair to sign the Broadband Innovation grant support letter. **The motion passed unanimously.**

6. Green Up Day Budget Discussion

Dave Atherton stated with all of the recent changes in the recycling world, the Town had received a letter before Green Up Day indicating that Rutland County Solid Waste does not want to take tires. Since the start of the year there have been 200 tires picked up in Town and there is a cost associated with getting rid of tires. Mr. Atherton suggested there should be consideration to set aside funding during the budget process for these items, as the Town does not want tires along the roadside. Some things that used to be free are no longer and there will be a cost associated. Mr. Atherton stated a couple of days before Green Up Day there was a call that on Steinberg Road there were 50+ tires in that area. The area at the end of Carver Street is also a problem. There was an incident where someone found a bunch of garbage and brought it to the Police Department, and they were able to track the names of those responsible. Tracy Wyman stated it bothers him that there have been people dropping tires on his property and he has taken care of them as he does not feel that it is the Town's responsibility for private property. Mr. Atherton has received many calls about garbage, and he does not know what the right answer is, but it has to be handled. Tracy Wyman stated during Green Up Day, there were 20 to 25 tires that would have come out of people's garages, as one could tell that they did not come from the side of the road. There was also a similar situation with five mattresses, and this is something that needs to be addressed for another year. Tim Guiles agreed that it is a problem and we need to make a concerted effort to place something in The Reporter that we need to take care of our own stuff. Doug Bailey stated people have learned that they can throw things on the side of the road before Green Up Day and it will be taken care of. Mr. Bailey agreed with Mr. Atherton that there needs to be funding put in the budget for this issue. Seth Hopkins thanked all the people who participated in Green Up Day and thanked Jim Leary for spearheading the Program. Mr.

Atherton stated the Board should also thank Helyn Anderson who has been all over Town picking up things.

7. Consider Adoption of VLCT Resolution

Seth Hopkins stated VLCT provided a memo to Mr. Atherton and questioned the pleasure of the Board. Mr. Hopkins did not find it to be anything that would be effective, urgent or presents an accurate picture for Brandon and suggested the Board take no action.

Motion by Seth Hopkins/Tim Guiles to take no action on the VLCT resolution. **The motion passed unanimously.**

8. Renewal of Note and Loan Modification Agreement

Sue Gage stated this is extending the grant anticipation note for Route 7 through the end of the project. It was thought it would be done by June 30th, but the project is not quite done. This will roll the same grant over through the end of November.

The grant anticipation is for \$2 million at 2.49% that is a line of credit while the Town is paying out for Segment 6 before the reimbursements from VTrans. Currently the amount out is \$750,000. Sue Gage stated this is the amount to pay Casella initially and has been carried forward. Dave Atherton stated the reimbursements are coming in quickly, but the Town has a lot of projects they are getting reimbursed for right now. They reduced the interest rate and Ms. Gage thought they should have offered that from the start. Seth Hopkins stated one-half point on the loan is a good savings for the Town.

Motion by Tracy Wyman/Tim Guiles to approve the renewal of the Note and Loan Modification agreement based on the terms discussed. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Doug Bailey questioned if the Town could pay off the outstanding amount and only draw from it when the Town needs it. Sue Gage advised once the amount is paid back, it cannot be accessed again, which is why it has not been paid off. This is not a revolving line of credit. Seth Hopkins noted this is not a common lending program. Tim Guiles wished to clarify that the Town has up to \$2 million to access and the Town can keep taking it out, but when paying it back the funds cannot be taken out again. Ms. Gage is not sure if this is unique to municipalities, but it is not revolving, and it is not like a tax anticipation note. Ms. Gage will do research on this agreement and advise the Board.

9. Fiscal

Seth Hopkins questioned if the Board would prefer to approve by a consent agenda the recommendations provided by Mr. Atherton as outlined in his memo concerning the following items:

- a) Consider Purchase of FY20/21 Diesel Fuel, Heating Fuel and Gasoline*
- b) Consider Purchase of FY 20/21 Propane*

c) Warrant – June 8, 2020 - \$98,872.89

d) Route 7 Construction Warrant – June 8, 2020 - \$164,338.08

Motion by Tracy Wyman/Brian Coolidge to approve the consent agenda of all items outlined above. **The motion passed unanimously.**

The Select Board recessed at 7:50PM.

The Select Board reconvened at 7:59PM.

Motion by Tim Guiles/Doug Bailey to enter into executive session at 8:00PM under the provisions of 1 V.S.A. 313(a)(3) – The appointment or employment or evaluation of a public officer or employee to include the Town Manager and Police Chief. **The motion passed unanimously.**

10. Executive Session

Motion by Brian Coolidge/Tracy Wyman to come out of executive session at 8:49PM. **The motion passed unanimously.**

There were no actions required.

11. Adjournment

Motion by Brian Coolidge/Tracy Wyman to adjourn the Select Board meeting at 8:50PM. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant
Recording Secretary