

**Brandon Select Board Meeting  
September 14, 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, Brent Buehler, Bill Moore, Greg Smela, Lee Kahrs, Shari Vaccarella, Chris Brickell, Marielle Blais

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

**1. Call to order**

**a) Agenda Adoption – Motion** by Doug Bailey/Tracy Wyman to adopt the agenda, as amended. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Add 3a – Municipal Planning Grant Discussion

Add 3b – Consider Waiving Interest and Penalties during COVID-19

**2. Approval of Minutes**

**a) Select Board Meeting – August 24, 2020**

**Motion** by Brian Coolidge/Tracy Wyman to approve the minutes of the August 24<sup>th</sup> Select Board meeting. **The motion passed unanimously.**

**3. Town Manager’s Report**

Dave Atherton provided a report for the weeks of August 31<sup>st</sup> and September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

**Segment 6:**

Repairs to concrete pier underneath the Town Office has started. It had some scouring at the base that will be prepped, and concrete will be added to fill voids. Concrete removal continues in preparation for setting the steel beams.

### ***Park Street:***

The granite curbing has been installed. The second concrete pour for the bioswale curbing will start on Monday and should be completed by Wednesday. Mr. Atherton was able to get the Class 1 highway paving and line striping that was originally scheduled for Spring of 2021 to be completed this year. This will complete the Park Street project 100% this year.

### ***Other happenings:***

The car charger installation started on September 10<sup>th</sup> in the Conant Square parking lot. This is funded by the grant Mr. Atherton received last year. The construction of the Town Hall sidewalk roof also started on September 10<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Atherton met with Devon Neary of the RRPC to conduct a site visit and start the application process for a Bike and Ped grant to rebuild the sidewalks on Union Street from Hannaford's to the rail crossing.

### ***Rec News:***

Soccer, flag football and cheering registration has opened up and we have folks signing up with the understanding that mask use is mandatory for all participants, coaches, and spectators per the guidance from the State. This past weekend the Rec Department partnered with Brandon Music and the Barn Opera Company to host a socially distant outdoor opera at Estabrook Park. "The Marriage of Figaro" was enjoyed by all who were clamoring for arts opportunities in this COVID-19 world. Coming soon – Kids Cornhole and Kickball. Brent Buehler asked if the plans for the town hall roof were available. Dave Atherton stated it is a one-page plan in the town office and includes drainage from the back of the structure.

### ***3a – Municipal Planning Grant Discussion***

Bill Moore advised the RRPC is putting together a consortium of towns and is proposing an application for the scoping and development of an interactive map for biking/hiking, village centers, art studios etc. Mr. Moore thought it is a good thing for the Town to participate in and it would not require anything other than the Town signing a resolution. The end result would be an interactive map for the Town's webpage and free mapping for the Town. Tim Guiles stated the document includes matched funds and asked what funds would be required. Mr. Moore stated the Town does not agree to match funds and there is no financial commitment. The matching funds would come from the RRPC and is not a financial commitment for the Town. Seth Hopkins noted this is addressed under the second page as it indicates the RRPC will act as the agent and the RRPC would be providing the match. Mr. Moore confirmed that was correct. Mr. Guiles suggested the document be changed to indicate the municipality is not responsible. Mr. Hopkins stated if there is an exceptional amount of money that would require a match and the Town did not choose to match it, they would not get the grant. Dave Atherton noted this is the same type resolution that comes through RRPC, similar to the grant for the parking area behind the Mobil station.

**Motion** by Tracy Wyman/Brian Coolidge to authorize the Town to move forward with adopting the resolution for the municipal planning grant with the RRPC. **The motion passed unanimously.**

### ***3b – Consider Waiving Interest and Penalties during COVID-19***

Dave Atherton noted this was discussed since COVID-19 started in March and the office staff has asked for clarification. The Board needs to determine if the accounts will accrue interest and penalties from March. The Board was going to see where delinquent taxes landed and the big issues are the water and sewer and people are asking about the sewer account. Interest is accruing on real estate as well. The Board should decide whether there will be interest accrued during COVID-19. Seth Hopkins suggested waiving the interest and penalties through the state of emergency from when the emergency began and ends.

**Motion** by Seth Hopkins/Tim Guiles to waive interest and penalties on property taxes during the declared state of emergency. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Seth Hopkins noted when the budget was adopted there was some income for interest and penalties that will put the Town behind on forecasted revenue. When planning next year's budget, the Board will want to consider the propriety of forecasting interest and penalties. Mr. Atherton noted it should be much smaller than it has been in the past.

## **4. Public Comment and Participation**

Doug Bailey stated there are still some places where the grass is not being mowed between the sidewalk and the road. Mr. Bailey questioned if the town crew will do that, or if it is the responsibility of the people that own the houses. Dave Atherton stated it is the landowner's property and this item has gotten better. Mr. Atherton has asked Josh to mow some of the rental properties, but the Town does not have an ordinance about the height of grass. Mr. Bailey stated it is noticeable downtown. Mr. Atherton advised the Town only mows the property that is town-owned, and the rest of the property is the landowners' responsibility. Brent Buehler stated many people have expressed dismay in the quality of the grass seed and that may have something to do with their reluctance to care for it. Mr. Atherton advised Casella started to reseed last week and at some point it has to be on the landowner to maintain their lawn. Mr. Hopkins stated there had been mention of reseeding some of the parks and Mr. Atherton noted Casella will reseed any spots with weeds for both private and public property.

## **5. Consider Update to Personnel Policy**

Seth Hopkins stated there are some technical changes but no substantive changes. Dave Atherton stated all changes have been prompted by VMERS and there are no changes in percentage, claims or payout wise.

**Motion** by Tracy Wyman/Brian Coolidge to approve the update to the personnel policy with some language changes that VMERS had requested. **The motion passed unanimously.**

## **6. Green Fleet Policy Discussion**

Dave Atherton and Tim Guiles had a conversation about the Green Fleet policy and Mr. Atherton was looking for clarification. There was a spread sheet on the Town's vehicles that requires additional information to be gathered. Tracy Wyman asked what the Board is trying to get out of all this information. Tim Guiles stated when this policy was passed, he knew it was going to be work to get the first set of data together and he has offered to help. There has been changes on gas and fuel usage and Mr. Guiles spent 6 to 8 hours calculating the CO2 emissions out of fuel usage. He has the data part of putting in fuel usage and mileage to where it will take about an hour once a year and once he figured how to use this, he asked for previous years to add it to the spreadsheet for usage over time. The last piece that is going to be challenging calls for an inventory of the vehicles and equipment that the Town owns with information such as the year purchased and model numbers. Mr. Guiles has offered to help gather this information and once the data is obtained it will be easier to add and delete when the Town buys and sells equipment. This will be the final stage of data acquisition for the Green Fleet policy implementation. Once completed, Mr. Atherton could have one of his staff add the numbers from the gas and fuel usage that will equate the CO2 emissions. Mr. Guiles noted when he proposed this policy, he was trying to be proactive about the Town's use of fuel and CO2 emissions and nothing in the policy is binding but it is a policymaker's tool to have accurate numbers of what the Town is using and over time possibly diminish its use of fossil fuels, be environmentally responsible and assist in reaching the goals of the State. Mr. Wyman does not see where there will be an end to using fossil fuels. Doug Bailey did not expect it will result in eliminating fossil fuels but when replacing equipment, the Town could look at other options mindful of the policy. There was discussion of possibly having an electric police car. It was noted the initial completion of the spreadsheet is the most time-consuming part and perhaps someone other than the town manager could retrieve the information. Mr. Atherton stated Elaine already keeps track of the fuel and questioned why another report had to be created. Mr. Guiles stated what this report does is take a summary of the data and produce CO2 emissions information so that when the Town goes to buy new equipment, it may assist in considering something with better efficiency. Mr. Atherton and Shawn have had conversations about what the Town would replace with battery-operated items, and most work done by the crew would not use batter powered equipment The highway department is the highest fuel usage and the only way to cut down on plowing would be to plow less roads and Mr. Atherton does not know how that would be effective. Mr. Guiles stated the policy does not bind the Town's purchasing decisions but provides useful data and should be a small investment of time on a yearly basis. Mr. Guiles offered to assist in gather the information by emailing each department to obtain the information. Mr. Atherton suggested visiting each of the departments to obtain the vehicle information and noted Jackie or Elaine would also have VIN information on vehicles, but equipment would require a hands-on way of obtaining the information. Seth Hopkins stated the Board approved the policy in December and has discussed the information and will proceed with the policy as adopted and see how it goes. Mr. Guiles will provide a Green Fleet report at the next Select Board meeting.

## **7. Fiscal**

- a) Warrant – September 14, 2020 - \$342,581.34**
- b) Route 7 Construction Warrant – September 14, 2020 - \$38,023.43**

**Motion** by Tracy Wyman/Brian Coolidge to approve the September 14<sup>th</sup> warrant in the amount of \$342,581.34 and the September 14<sup>th</sup> Route 7 Construction warrant in the amount of \$38,023.43. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Doug Bailey questioned whether the miscellaneous legal services invoice was for prep work for the Dinn property that will be obtained at the sale or related to the property selling policy. Mr. Atherton stated this was for the animal control ordinance and mobile home abandonment. Mr. Bailey questioned the VT Tennis Court Service invoice for the Seminary Hill basketball court. Mr. Atherton reported there was a sewer break and a hole had to be dug in the court and in order to redo it, there was a cost. Bill Moore advised the Town was awarded a \$10,000 Municipal Recreation grant last winter that will be used for part of the repairs. Mr. Bailey asked if there will be a playground at that park and Mr. Moore noted that is something that is being discussed.

The Select Board recessed at 7:39PM.

The Select Board reconvened at 7:58PM.

Mr. Atherton requested Board members to visit the Town Office to sign documents.

**Motion** by Tracy Wyman/Brian Coolidge to enter into executive session at 7:59PM to discuss the appointment or employment or evaluation of a public officer or employee under the provisions of 1 V.S.A. 313(a)(3) to include the Town Manager and Chief of Police. **The motion passed unanimously.**

## **7. Executive Session**

The Board came out of executive session at 8:21PM. There was no action required.

## **8. Adjournment**

**Motion** by Brian Coolidge/Tim Guiles to adjourn the Select Board meeting at 8:21PM. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant  
Recording Secretary