

**Brandon Select Board Meeting  
REVISED MINUTES  
September 28, 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, Brian Coolidge, Doug Bailey

**Others In Attendance:** Dave Atherton, Brent Buehler, Bill Moore, Lee Kahrs, Shari Vaccarella, Stephanie Jerome, Butch Shaw, Bernie Carr, Chris Brickell, Sue Gage, Allie Walter

The meeting was called to order by Seth Hopkins – Chair at 7:01PM.

**1. Call to order**

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

Add Executive Session in accordance with 1 V.S.A. 313(a)(3) - Appointment or Employment or Evaluation of a Public Officer or Employee

**2. Approval of Minutes**

**a) Select Board Meeting – September 14, 2020**

**Motion** by Tim Guiles/Brian Coolidge to approve the minutes of the September 14<sup>th</sup> Select Board meeting. **The motion passed unanimously.**

**3. Town Manager’s Report**

Dave Atherton provided a report for the weeks of September 14<sup>th</sup> and September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020.

**Segment 6:**

Concrete pours for the piers have been completed. The steel beams are scheduled to arrive in two weeks for installation. The project is a little ahead schedule.

**Park Street:**

The bioswale construction has been completed and all of the plantings are in. Final road grading continues in preparation for paving to start on the 5<sup>th</sup> that will probably last about 4 days.

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

A \$3,000.00 rebate has been received from Green Mountain Power for the installation of the car chargers.

Mr. Atherton attended the annual VLCT business meeting on September 23<sup>rd</sup>. There was nothing really big this year and is much in line with what they were working on last year.

Mr. Atherton attended the Regional Transportation Council meeting on September 24<sup>th</sup>. The key topic was on the upgrade of passenger and freight rail plans with a presentation by VTrans. Mr. Atherton has again opened up the conversation of including a rail stop in Town and will keep the Select Board updated as the conversation moves forward. They appear to be interested in it as there is low passenger counts on the train.

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

The Rec Department has enjoyed a successful re-launch of youth sports here in our communities. While our participation was expected to be lower than in years past, spirits are up, and the numbers are surprisingly robust; 2019 there were 102 vs. the 89 for this fall season. Our Rec football for grades 3 – 8 is at zero as our commissioner made the decision not to run the program due to the state mandated modified rules. Starting Fridays in October, we will have kids cornhole at Estabrook Park and kickball at Neshobe. Cross country running has yet to start and the possibility of a fall golf program is still being explored. Friday, September 25<sup>th</sup> saw the Carter Insurance Agency Pick-up concert held in Central Park to provide some synergy for the Chamber/DBA “Brandon Celebrates” events. This was the last concert for the inaugural season. Many thanks to our sponsor, Chad Hayes of the Carter Insurance Agency, and our performers: Emily Doty, Gunnar Tinsman, Kimberlee Simmons, Kayla Passione, Mark Frazee, and Hilary Collier and our first performer and talent wrangler, Jess Crossman. This will become a staple of our 2021 drive-in schedule, so stay tuned. The Rec will be collaborating with Omya on a safety program around outdoor exercise. Subsidized by a generous donation, the Rec will be offering reflective vests and hats for folks that walk/jog/run the highways, byways, and greenways of Brandon. \$5 will get you a DOT certified reflective vest or a stylish reflective hat, both emblazoned with the B-Rec logo. Contact Bill Moore at the town office to get yours before they run out!

Tim Guiles asked for an update on the sidewalk issue as he walked the sidewalks and noticed there are some that are in better shape than other. Dave Atherton advised there is not a final resolution to this issue. There have been some test spots done with a product that resurfaces it and some core samples were done to see if there are any issues with the concrete before doing it all. The Town has purchased the sidewalk sealer that arrived today and will start prepping them and getting sealer on the good portions. The patched areas will be revisited in the spring to see how effective the product is. Mr. Guiles noted he attended the VLCT Vermont Roads program and asked if the Town’s staff participates in these programs. Mr. Atherton reported the Public Works staff has participated in some of them and people from VLCT have also come to Town to do training. Mr. Guiles noted they recommend in the wintertime to understand the plowing that Select Board members ride

along with them. Mr. Atherton suggested Mr. Guiles contact Shawn to discuss this request. Doug Bailey requested status on the town clock, the municipal parking lot, EV signage and where the water runoff will be for the town hall sidewalk roof project. Mr. Atherton reported the town clock has an electrical issue and the person that usually fixes it was unable to do the repair. One of the Public Works staff will be working on the clock to try to fix the electrical issue. There have been some temporary signs made for the parking lot, but Mr. Atherton noted the EV chargers have not been turned on yet. Mr. Bailey thanked Bill Moore for his safety collaboration with Omya for the vests and hats. With regard to the town hall sidewalk roof drainage, Mr. Atherton stated there will be a dry well built on the north side of the structure and there will be a perforated pipe along the perimeter that will run into the catch basin on Route 7. Shari Vaccarella requested more detail of where the drainage is going to be and where it daylights. She was interested due to the town hall's close proximity to their property. Mr. Atherton suggested she speak with the contractor. Ms. Vaccarella noted there should be a site plan and specifics. Mr. Atherton stated the plans were sent to her and no questions were raised. Ms. Vaccarella did not receive construction documents and there were no drainage details provided, instead there was only a note call for crushed stone over vegetation fabric. to her, this is not adequate to describe the perforated pipe detail and it does not show the pipe's location in plan. Mr. Atherton noted it is only a one-page document with the design of the roof. Tim Guiles stated it seemed like a fair request that the piping is understood. Mr. Atherton asked if the Select Board would like the contractor to draw up a plan and noted when this issue first arose, he sat with the Vaccarella's and asked if they wanted to see the plans and they did not want to be included. This project has been discussed for over a year and suggested this could have been addressed earlier. Mr. Atherton sent the revised plan to Ms. Vaccarella on April 15<sup>th</sup> with a response that it was received. He is not sure what else can be done and noted he could ask the contractor to draw up the drainage and how it is going to work. Ms. Vaccarella advised that she would be okay with walking the site with Mr. Atherton and the contractor to obtain the details of the drainage. Mr. Atherton will confirm a site visit with the contractor for tomorrow with Mr. Atherton in attendance. Brent Buehler asked if there is a contract price on this project and Mr. Atherton advised there is a not-to-exceed price of around \$50,000 for the new revision. Mr. Atherton will send Mr. Buehler the contract information on the project.

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

Bill Moore read the following letter for the record:

*“After the Brandon Independence Day Celebration Committee was forced to cancel the 2020 celebration due to COVID-19 concerns, the committee voted to support the Brandon Area Chamber of Commerce/Downtown Brandon Alliance’s “Celebrate Brandon” event by rescheduling the fireworks portion for Friday, September 25<sup>th</sup>. We made the decision to move the firing location to a place where the greatest number of people could enjoy the display, downtown Brandon. Necessity being the mother of invention led us to a central location that allowed for folks within a mile of the immediate downtown to see the fireworks from their home and our parks in socially distant small groups. A huge thank you goes out to: **Chief Tom Kilpeck and the Brandon Fire Department** for providing extra safety precautions around the new location before, during and after the beautiful display. The **Brandon Area Rescue Squad** posted up with the fire department to provide an extra layer of protection. Our **Brandon Police Department** were on foot patrol and were engaged in some community outreach and protection*

as well. **Tom and the entire crew from NorthStar Fireworks** created an amazing display that was talked about all weekend long.

Finally, the folks at Park Village have shouldered the load for decades, serving the town by hosting the fireworks during the BIDCC displays. **We would like to thank the families who were directly impacted by the fireworks (sound) being in their backyards for the first time here in downtown Brandon.** Brandon is truly a great community and the support, ingenuity and our neighborly spirit was on full display this weekend!

We will see you back in downtown Brandon with the return of all of our festivities to downtown Brandon in 2021. Planning is happening now and If you have any interest in serving as a volunteer on the committee **or** on the day of the celebration, **please email me [bmoore@townofbrandon.com](mailto:bmoore@townofbrandon.com)**

*Cheers,*

*Bill Moore*

*2020 Chair of the Brandon Independence Day Celebration Committee”*

Bernie Carr noted this past weekend was a great weekend in Brandon. He received lots of good comments, particularly about the fireworks and thanked Mr. Moore for his efforts and everyone who assisted with the weekend.

Tim Guiles advised the Green Fleet report that he was to provide to the Select Board will be postponed to the next meeting as Jackie was gathering information for him that required additional time.

Sue Gage reported all active voters were mailed ballots on September 25<sup>th</sup> and a number of people have returned them. The polling place will be the Brandon American Legion at 550 Franklin Street and will be indoors for those who wish to vote in person or to bring their ballots. There will be people outdoors as well if people want to drop off their absentee ballots. People can also return their ballots to the town office. For those who do not receive a ballot within the week, Ms. Gage suggested they contact the town office as there may be an incorrect address for those people.

Stephanie Jerome reported the legislative session ended on Friday and passed a \$7.17 billion budget. In addition, the State received \$1.25 billion in CARES Act funds with the State being one of the top three qualifiers for receiving the largest amount of money per capita in the country. There will be expanded hazard pay for front line workers with a long list of qualifiers who are people deemed essential workers. It will be recognition for the people who worked during the early days of the pandemic. The Restart Vermont Technical Assistance program for businesses will provide up to \$3,000 in grants to help businesses in a wide range of capacities. Ms. Jerome noted the completed census is an important item for the community. It is not certain if the data will be collected after September 30<sup>th</sup> and Ms. Jerome encouraged people to get the word out. The legislature will be going back in session in January. Butch Shaw stated the budget is a living working document and it keeps both representatives busy to keep up to date with it. There is \$3 million allotted to jump start the CUD with Goshen, Sudbury, Brandon, Hubbardton and Pittsford current members. Another important piece is the transportation budget that has been funded above normal levels with the Type 2 and 3 highway grants fully funded. Many

projects that are often under threat are funded with some of the COVID money. Another \$1 million was also allocated for the EV program and \$500,000 for the transit companies. Mr. Shaw also noted the census is very important and advised the Select Board has the right to appeal the count if they do not think they have the correct number. With regard to the train station, when Amtrak started from Rutland to Whitehall, through the efforts of Castleton, they provided prove that it would better serve people and they changed the stop from Fairhaven to Castleton. He thanked the Chamber for this past weekend's events. Dave Atherton asked if the Class 2 grants were the ones the Town applied for in the winter and spring and Mr. Shaw confirmed that they were. Mr. Atherton advised when he attended the whistle stop hearings, they were basing stops 15 miles apart, however, Ferrisburgh and Charlotte were not 15 miles apart. He noted Brandon is 16 miles apart from both Rutland and Middlebury. Bernie Carr stated the Union Street sidewalk will be completed from the train to the business district and suggested marketing efforts could be done on this item. Ms. Jerome also thanked the Chamber, Bill Moore and his staff and the downtown businesses for a phenomenal event this weekend. Chris Brickell thanked the efforts of Representatives Jerome and Shaw as this legislative session was crazy and they are really connected with the Town. Brent Buehler noted Red Clover also did a fabulous, well-organized job. Mr. Buehler asked if ballots can be put in the box outside the town office. Sue Gage advised they can be placed in the drop box outside the town office, brought into the town office or dropped off at Neshobe School. Mr. Buehler questioned if the aquifer is being monitored or if there is protocol with the changes in weather trends as he had been advised by someone that lives in Forestdale that their well has been dry. Seth Hopkins stated the Town is provided water from the Brandon Fire District and have been told it is well-protected and there is a more than adequate supply. Mr. Hopkins was not aware that there have been any conservation methods from the Brandon Fire District. Dave Atherton was not aware of any issues with Brandon Fire District 2 and noted this could be someone with their own well that is experiencing a problem. Mr. Hopkins noted it is always wise to be conservative with our natural resources and the aquifer does recharge itself, but there are some people that do not get their water from the Fire District.

## **5. Consider 2020 VTrans Bicycle & Pedestrian Grant Support**

Dave Atherton advised this grant would continue the sidewalk on both sides of Union Street and is the logical next step to continuing it down to the railroad tracks where the other new sidewalk is. The RRPC thinks it is a good project and a letter of support was requested to be included with the application. Mr. Hopkins thanked the Town Manager for the work he has put into this grant application.

**Motion** by Doug Bailey/Tim Guiles to adopt the letter of support for submission with the 2020 VTrans Bicycle & Pedestrian grant. **The motion passed unanimously.**

## **7. Fiscal**

- a) **Warrant – September 28, 2020 - \$231,031.88**
- b) **Route 7 Construction Warrant – September 28, 2020 - \$183,521.56**

**Motion** by Doug Bailey/Brian Coolidge to approve the September 28<sup>th</sup> warrant in the amount of \$231,031.88. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Doug Bailey questioned the two Robert Black invoices that were identical amounts. Dave Atherton advised it was one invoice for signage development that was split between the DBA and Economic Development. The new signs are “You Are Here” signs that are intended to direct people to where things are happening. Mr. Bailey questioned the invoice from BSN Sports for soccer balls. Bill Moore advised that due to COVID-19, each participant in the program has to have their own soccer ball. Seth Hopkins stated the signs can be helpful for building community in terms of identifying areas and helping people to speak a common language. Tim Guiles reported he has been working with Mr. Black on the Green Ways project that will encourage people to walk more. There is the possibility of getting a trail from downtown to Forestdale.

**Motion** by Brian Coolidge/Tim Guiles to approve the September 28<sup>th</sup> Route 7 Construction warrant in the amount of \$183,521.56. **The motion passed unanimously.**

The Select Board recessed at 7:57PM.

The Select Board reconvened at 8:00 PM.

Bernie Carr reported the Brandon Harvestfest will be held this Sunday from 1PM to 4PM at Estabrook Park. Brent Buehler advised they are trying to defund the food and beverage service on Amtrak and suggested people can go to [change.org](http://change.org) to encourage continuing this service. Bill Moore advised there will be a campaign forum held at the Brandon Library on Wednesday October 14<sup>th</sup>. Bernie Carr thanked the library and Mr. Moore for taking over this event.

**Motion** by Doug Bailey/Tim Guiles to enter into executive session at 8:01PM 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. **The motion passed unanimously.**

## **7. Executive Session**

**Motion** by Brian Coolidge/Doug Bailey to come out of executive session at 8:48PM. **The motion passed unanimously.**

There was no action required.

## **8. Adjournment**

**Motion** by Brian Coolidge/Doug Bailey to adjourn the Select Board meeting at 8:49PM. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant  
Recording Secretary