

Brandon Select Board Meeting June 14, 2021

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

Board Members In Attendance: Seth Hopkins, Tim Guiles, Tracy Wyman, Brian Coolidge, Michael Markowski

Others In Attendance: Dave Atherton, Tom Kilpeck, Steve Cijka, Sue Gage, Bill Moore

Others in Attendance via Zoom: Chris Brickell, Keith Whitcomb, Neil Allen, Will Ariadne

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order by Seth Hopkins - Chair at 7:04PM.

a) Agenda Adoption

Motion by Michael Markowski/Brian Coolidge to adopt the agenda as amended. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Remove Item #5 Consider Rescinding 1994 Resolution re: Hours of Operation for Estabrook Field as the Board has already acted on this item.

Add Item #5 to Consider Reinstating Interest and Penalties for Delinquent Taxes and Sewer.

2. Approval of Minutes

a) Select Board Meeting – May 24, 2021

Motion by Tracy Wyman/Michael Markowski to approve the minutes of the May 24th Select Board Meeting. **The motion passed unanimously.**

3. Town Manager's Report

Dave Atherton provided a report for the weeks of May 31st and June 7th, 2021:

The Segment Six sidewalk repairs/replacement continue in the downtown area. The final walk through is still planned for June 21st.

Mr. Atherton has applied for the FY22 MRGP grant. This is an annual grant that funds our gravelroad ditching and runoff requirements. The Town is eligible for another \$20,000 this year.

The Town will be receiving \$390,008.76 in ARPA funds. This will be sent in two installments within a 12 month period.

DPW has rented an excavator to complete the ditching, drainage and culvert work on Florence Road and High Pond Road. We are looking at paving these in August.

Held a bid opening on May 28th for the Conant Square Park & Ride. Lowell Landscaping was the low bidder. We are looking at completing this in mid-July.

The curb in front of the Brandon Artist Guild is not where it should be. There was an incident with a truck that damaged the curb. The insurance company has been contacted and the Town will be reimbursed for the full amount for replacement. VTrans is aware of this incident.

Rec Department News:

Summer is almost here! Our camps have been filling up. From Soccer to Cheering, Sewing-Swimming. We have many camps that have been created and more that are going up every day. All registrations can be found at our registration site: brandonrec.com.

We were disappointed to hear that our Summer Matters grant request was amongst the \$4+ million dollars of Summer Camp grants that were not able to be funded. Vermont After School received \$7.4 million in requests.

Our partnership with the RNESU looks to expand with the possibility of the Brandon Rec's Colleen Wright coordinating a morning supplement to the recovery camps that they are offering for July 5th - August 6th. We are close to inking a cooperative agreement.

The First Brandon Rec Job Fair was an unmitigated success. Thanks to the Brandon Inn and the Vermont Department of Health for working with Brandon's Safety maven, Debbie Boyce, to set up a vaccination clinic in conjunction with an event that connected folks with our 19 local employers. Otter Valley and local tech schools helped get this information into the hands of juniors and seniors. We will be back with a fall job fair, stay tuned..

The Brandon Rec/Brandon Area Toy Project/American Legion Everyone Eats collaboration ended on May 28th. Volunteers donated over 1300 hours in all kinds of weather to help make this a cool program work in our area. Thanks to Harry at the VT Farmer's Food Center, Colleen Wright, Dallas Ladd, Patty Moore, Beth Quenneville Sue Danforth, and Post 55's Aaron Tucker. The Brandon Forest -Dale Lions Club is working with Everyone Eats to get meals out at the Neshobe School for the month of June.

Literacy Day is Monday June 28th at Estabrook Park from 4PM – 7PM. The Brandon Area Toy Project, Brandon Rec and the Brandon Free Public Library are collaborating to make sure kids have books to read this summer.

The State of Vermont has announced the 2021 Buildings and Grounds grant program. We will be writing a grant to support improvements to the town hall that will allow for controlled access and make the downstairs bathrooms public restrooms for the downtown.

The Brandon Craft Fair held at Estabrook on June 5th was a tremendous success. 85+ vendors were happy with the impressive amount of people that showed up in spite of the oppressive heat. Dog Park Committee Chair Karen Trayah will be organizing a Wednesday "Market Fest" that will run on the nights of the Brandon Area Chamber of Commerce's Music at the River Bend Summer concert series in July and August.

Tim Guiles questioned what will be done with the ARPA funds. Dave Atherton advised there is discussion of using it for infrastructure like the Union Street sewer and water as it has restricted uses but can be used for the Clean Water program. Nothing has been decided and the Town is waiting to have the check in hand. Mr. Guiles suggested having a community forum to obtain public input on the funds. Seth Hopkins suggested this topic could be warned for discussion at the next Select Board meeting. Mr. Atherton advised the uses are limited and cannot be used to pave roads. Mr. Guiles suggested providing the scope and range of options prior to the discussion, but he would like to have input from the public. Mr. Atherton stated this cannot be just placed in the general fund, unless the Town had significant losses, which was not the case. This is like a grant where the Town has to show for everything that is done with the funds. Mr. Atherton advised the Town is getting \$390,000 and noted that Steve Cijka and he have had conversations concerning areas in wastewater that the funds could be used for. Mr. Guiles stated it seemed to be a broader scope in looking at the information that Mr. Atherton provided. Mr. Atherton noted affordable housing would also be something that it could also be used. Mr. Hopkins stated there had also been a suggestion to replacing the town garage. This item will be placed on the next meeting agenda for further discussion.

Tim Guiles reported people have asked him about the signs in central park. Mr. Guiles is a fan of Foley Brothers but questioned the signs at the intersection as it is a busy intersection. Dave Atherton agreed and noted the signs are not supposed to be on public property. The Town did previously allow banners and signs due to Segment 6. Mr. Atherton suggested Mr. Guiles contact the Zoning Administrator as that would be the chain of command for those types of inquiries.

Mr. Guiles requested an update on the Wi-Fi. Bill Moore reported he talked with the contractor and he will be providing the Town with more numbers and information about recurring costs, the possibility of expanding beyond downtown and what type of fixed costs will have to be brought to the town office. It was suggested to add this item to the next Select Board meeting agenda.

4. Public Comment and Participation

Tom Kilpeck was present to provide his semi-annual report as the Rental Code Officer, Town Health Inspector and 911 Coordinator. With regard to rental codes, so far in 2021 he has performed 24 certificate of occupancy inspections on rental housing. Currently on the books he shows 488 rental units in Town ranging from single bedroom to full single family homes. Annually rental housing unit owners have to do a statement of compliance that is their self-inspection indicating they are still code compliant. There is a \$25/unit annual fee and is the

income for rental housing. This year Mr. Kilpeck pushed out the annual statement due date to June 1st due to COVID, as there were a lot of tenants not allowing outside people into their homes. As of June 1st, 292 of the 488 units, or 59%, have returned that they are compliant. The other 41% will be receiving notices of delinquency concerning their statements of compliance. As the Town Health Inspector, he has to take animal bite complaints and has received four so far this year with only one significant and the owner of the animal had the animal put down. As the Town's 911 Coordinator, he received a few requests for updated 911 addresses and a couple of new curb cuts for new numbers to be measured and applied. Mr. Kilpeck has taken care of that and he has contacted the State personnel that handles these. All 911 maps are available online. Seth Hopkins thanked Mr. Kilpeck for doing three different jobs that are all important. He noted Mr. Kilpeck is also the Fire Chief and has a family, and the Board is grateful for doing all these jobs. Ms. Hopkins asked with regard to the rental units how many people live in those collectively. Mr. Kilpeck stated he could compile those numbers, but there are some units that he has not inspected. In the three years he has been doing this job, the ones that he has done have all been measured. Mr. Kilpeck noted that he could determine what the maximum capacity could be throughout the 488 units. He noted that roughly a dozen individuals own 40% of the rentals, indicating there are 79 units at Park Village alone.

Bill Moore reporting as the Parade Committee Chair indicated the celebration is happening on July 3rd with the parade starting at 10AM. There will be food vendors, many games, the Great Duck Race, a street dance beginning at 6:30PM and fireworks at 9:30PM.

5. Consider Reinstating Penalties for Delinquent Taxes and Sewer

Seth Hopkins stated this item has been added to the agenda for consideration due to the Governor's announcement that the state of emergency will end tomorrow. Sue Gage asked when this is to be instituted and it was noted that it will begin tomorrow.

Motion by Tracy Wyman/Brian Coolidge to reinstate delinquent penalties and interest on taxes and sewer effective June 15th. **The motion passed unanimously.**

6. Consider Brandon Energy Committee Mission Statement and On-going Tasks

Dave Atherton reported Tim Guiles drafted a document for the Board's consideration for the Energy Committee. Tim Guiles had a meeting with two of the four Brandon Energy Committee members, Matt Orchard and Jack Schneider to talk about the Committee and the needs for the future. Mr. Guiles also sent the draft to Edna Sutton and Lowell Rasmussen and all Committee members endorse this statement and liked what was put forward. Mr. Guiles stated the idea is that Vermont has energy goals for 2030 and 2050 that are significant and each community will need to do things to reach the goals. Mr. Guiles stated the mission of the Energy Committee would be to help the Town do its' part to achieve the Vermont energy goals. The ongoing tasks of the Committee would be to gather data to track energy use, organize community outreach activities to inform the community about opportunities to save energy and to analyze and make suggestions to the Select Board about strategic choices to help the Town reduce its' carbon footprint. Mr. Guiles advised just before COVID, the Committee had planned to do a major event at the high school with electric cars and other vendors concentrating on saving energy. The

last point would be that the Energy Committee would not have the authority to incur expenses but may request funds for worthy projects. Seth Hopkins confirmed that the four current Energy Committee members were willing to continue to serve. Mr. Guiles noted they would also like to request the vacant seat be advertised. Mr. Hopkins stated there is a 5th spot that is vacant and this is the official Select Board announcement that anyone interested in serving on this Committee should submit a letter of interest to the Town Manager.

Motion by Tim Guiles/Tracy Wyman for the Board to endorse the Brandon Energy Committee Mission Statement and On-Going Tasks document as presented. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Seth Hopkins thanked Tim Guiles for developing the document. Mr. Hopkins suggested where the document discusses expenses, the preferable time for requesting funds would be during the budget workshops when the budget is set for the next fiscal year. Dave Atherton reported the Town has purchased a battery-powered push mower and weed whacker.

7. Appointments

a) Development Review Board – Remainder of 1-year Term Ending June 30, 2022

Seth Hopkins reported the Board received a letter from Jack Schneider, the current DRB Alternate, requesting to become a full member filling the vacant seat. Mr. Atherton advised historically the alternate would move into the position, but it needs approval by the Select Board.

Motion by Tracy Wyman/Brian Coolidge to appoint Jack Schneider to the Development Review Board for the remainder of the 1-year term ending June 30, 2022. **The motion passed unanimously.**

8. Financial Management Questionnaire

Sue Gage provided the Board the annual Financial Management Questionnaire and noted one of the outstanding questions is whether the Select Board members have attended financial training. She heard back from Mr. Guiles and asked whether any other board members have attended the VLCT Select Board Financial training. Ms. Gage stated the reason for this question is there are a number of towns who were taken advantage of by their personnel, specifically treasurers, so the State has indicated select boards need to review financial management and attend trainings. Seth Hopkins reported he has attended the Select Board Institute, but finances is not a large component of it, but is part of it. Mr. Hopkins has also worked in banking and is aware of dual-controls. Ms. Gage confirmed on the questionnaire the Board has had training. Tim Guile suggested Ms. Gage advise the Select Board of any trainings that she hears about. Mr. Hopkins stated the reason for this question may be the VLCT is trying to address towns without a town manager or towns with a very small staff. Ms. Gage advised training is usually scheduled around the end of March. Dave Atherton noted Ms. Gage has been providing the Select Board quarterly financial reports that provides explanations. The Town is also audited every year and the auditors also provide a presentation to the Select Board.

9. Late Homestead Penalty

Tim Guiles asked whether there is a need for this penalty and whether there is a significant hardship for the Town as he did not see a need for it if the Town does not have losses. Sue Gage stated most people file their Homestead when they file their tax returns, but there are some instances when some file at a different time. Seth Hopkins noted the Town did not do this last year but has done it in previous years. Ms. Gage advised it is a small number of people and a small number of penalties, \$2,000 at the most. Ms. Gage stated homestead declarations are downloaded on a weekly basis so she does not feel that it is causing extra work. She does not agree with the penalty, as it is not a lot of people and has a bad affect on people who may have just missed it or could not file on time. She would encourage the Board does not institute the penalty.

Motion by Tim Guiles /Brian Coolidge to not assess the Late Homestead Penalty. **The motion passed unanimously.**

10. Fiscal

a) General Fund Warrant – June 14, 2021 – \$91,168.68

Motion by Brian Coolidge/Tim Guiles to approve the warrants of June 14, 2021 in the amount of \$91,168.68. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Dave Atherton reported the large number of Brandon Lumber invoices was due to the work done on the deck in Kennedy Park and the posts for the Welcome to Brandon signs that needed replacement.

11. Adjournment

Motion by Brian Coolidge/Tracy Wyman to adjourn the Select Board meeting at 7:53PM. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant
Recording Secretary