

Brandon Select Board Meeting September 13, 2021

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

Board Members In Attendance: Tim Guiles, Tracy Wyman, Michael Markowski

Others In Attendance: Dave Atherton, Jack Schneider, Jim Emerson, Bernie Carr

Other In Attendance Via Zoom: Stephanie Jerome

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order by Tracy Wyman – Vice-Chair at 7:00PM.

a) Agenda Adoption

Motion by Mike Markowski/Tim Guiles to adopt the agenda. **The motion passed unanimously.**

2. Approval of Minutes

a) Select Board Meeting – August 23, 2021

Motion by Tim Guiles/Mike Markowski to approve the minutes of the August 23rd Select Board meeting. **The motion passed unanimously.**

3. Town Manager's Report

Dave Atherton announced that DuBois & King in association with the Town of Brandon & S. W. Cole were presented an award from the American Council of Engineering Companies for the Segment 6 project. (See Attachment)

Dave Atherton provided a report for the weeks of August 23rd through September 10th, 2021:

. Per the Select Board, Mr. Atherton had a video meeting with Representative Shaw and Jennifer Fitch of the Department of Buildings and General Services to discuss leasing options or transfer of the 132 +/- acre lot for possible installation of a solar array. The next step will be the State determining if they want to liquidate the property or entertain a long-term lease to the Town. Mr. Atherton also mentioned the possibility of sub-leasing and if it was viable. He has not received any information back on this item.

. Mr. Atherton met with Stephanie Smith of Hazard Mitigation to discuss creating an application to obtain scoping funding for the replacement of the undersized bridge on North Street. This has been discussed since tropical storm Irene.

. Mr. Atherton also discussed with Stephanie Smith of Hazard Mitigation about the new ARPA funding for property buyouts that were not eligible through traditional FEMA funding. Mr. Atherton will be sending out letters to the Newton Road residents that are eligible for the ARPA funding and hopefully move forward with buyouts.

. The Town will be sending 30-day letters to all delinquent tax/sewer accounts. After this, the accounts will go to the Town's attorney to start the tax sale process.

. Mr. Atherton had a meeting with Consolidated Communications to discuss downtown wi-fi options. They also discussed changing the Town's services in all the Town buildings. They are putting together a quote and will be meeting with the Town again to discuss options. They have been in Town on a build-out of 24 miles of fiber.

Rec Department News:

. There was a successful return to team sports. Numbers are up as we have 134 kids playing soccer in grades PreK – 6th. flag football for grades 1st – 8th has 62 kids and youth cheering for grades 4th – 8th has 18 participants.

. Pick-up table tennis for adults is starting again on Thursday at 6:30PM in this meeting space. At this time, we are not requiring masks, but this is subject to change.

. Pick-up basketball on Sundays at OV from 8AM to 10AM. Masking is required in all RNESU buildings.

. Harvest Fest is a go for October 3rd starting at 1PM. The 2021 collaboration with the Brandon Area Chamber, Brandon Free Public Library, Brandon Area Toy Project and Neshobe PTO will be the best yet! Wagon rides and photography are back along with pumpkin sales, stick people and so much more.

. Mr. Moore has submitted a letter of intent to apply for a VOREC grant for work to be done at Estabrook Park that includes a tennis court move, 3900-foot ADA path, pump track and skate park. Invitations to apply go out September 27th.

Tim Guiles asked if it is known how many letters will be sent for the delinquent sewer and taxes. Dave Atherton can get the number but did not have at the meeting. Mr. Atherton noted the process is successful as the letter will usually reduce the number of the properties that are sent to tax sale, which is usually around 6 properties.

Tim Guiles questioned the plans for paving the Town's parking lot behind the Dunkin Donuts. Dave Atherton stated the contractor has been having an issue with retaining workers but has indicated it will be done before the pavers arrive. The parking area will only be paved as the Town does not own the right of way to the parking lot. Once the Dunkin Donuts is built, that area will also be paved.

4. Public Comment and Participation

Mike Markowski reported the Fire Department's annual Corn Hole Tournament fundraiser will be held at Estabrook Park next weekend.

Jim Emerson of the Brandon Energy Committee reported that he had received some misinformation about the solar prices that he had provided to the Select Board. Mr. Emerson will submit corrected information to the Select Board at the next meeting.

Mr. Emerson, Jack Schneider and Bill Moore met to discuss SolarFest. The SolarFest group is interested in moving the event to Brandon and advised they spent their last meeting discussing moving to Brandon. They are most interested in the property the State owns near Park Village. It is hoped the Town will be able to make headway with the State regarding this property.

Mr. Emerson wished to apologize if he stepped out of bounds regarding actions of the Energy Committee regarding the open meeting law. Mr. Emerson would like to offer some information to the Select Board that he has received on the open meeting laws. He talked to the Secretary of State and received some great clarification, particularly regarding emails between members. He would like to present a draft training document for new committee members to clarify meeting protocols and information on the open meeting laws. Mr. Emerson would also like to flesh out what the relationship between the Energy Committee and Select Board should be. Tracy Wyman suggested this would be good to discuss when the full Select Board is present.

Mr. Emerson noted it was suggested that the Energy Committee submit articles to The Reporter and presented a draft of the first article from the Energy Committee and welcomed the Select Board's feedback. Mr. Emerson will provide a copy to Mr. Coolidge and Mr. Hopkins. (See Attachment)

Dave Atherton suggested the VLCT has training on open meeting laws that he will look into. He has been noticing other sub-committees also having too much email chatter and that has to be calmed down. Mr. Atherton noted emails between members are good for scheduling, but for transparency, all other business should be discussed during the public meetings. He will reach out to the VLCT to see if there is a video that the sub-committees can watch. Mr. Emerson stated the Secretary of State was very good about clarifying questions that he posed regarding the functioning of the committee, and he will share this with the Select Board. Mr. Atherton stated once something is placed in an email format, it becomes public record and can be subpoenaed.

Dave Atherton reported Stephane Jerome and he will be meeting with a representative from Neighborworks this Friday to assess properties for retrofitting. Mr. Atherton suggested it is a good start to get Neighborworks familiar with the Town. Stephanie Jerome advised she was part of a legislature meeting with the new director of Neighborworks. Ms. Jerome stated it is a good opportunity to get on the ground floor for weatherizing and getting the older homes modernized. Neighborworks has a huge number of resources for moderate- and low-income residents and landlords. Jim Emerson questioned if a member of the Energy Committee could participate. Tim Guiles noted there are a lot of groups that have great programs, but there is a problem with getting participation and it is hoped to get this information out to the community. Ms. Jerome

would like to get a feeling for they have to offer but she is not sure what can be offered during Friday's meeting. Mr. Guiles advised the Energy Committee has done a lot of research on Neighborworks, BROOC and Efficiency Vermont. Jack Schneider noted the Energy Committee will be having a table at Harvest Fest and Efficiency Vermont has offered to participate with the Energy Committee at the October 3rd event. The Committee would like Neighborworks to participate as well. Ms. Jerome will discuss this item during Friday's meeting and noted that Mr. Schneider is welcome to attend the meeting that will begin at 9AM in Mr. Atherton's office.

5. Consider Appointment to Energy Committee

Dave Atherton advised the Town received one letter of interest for a nomination to the Energy Committee.

Tim Guiles stated it has been a couple of weeks since the Select Board announced this position and noted Robert Black has an interest in participating in the Town's Energy Committee having run an energy committee in Michigan. Mr. Guiles thinks that he will be a great asset. Jim Emerson stated it would be good timing to add another member as the Committee is having each member take ownership of separate goals.

Motion by Tim Guiles/Mike Markowski to accept the letter of interested from Robert Black to participate on the Brandon Energy Committee. **The motion passed unanimously.**

6. Fiscal

a) Warrant FY 2021/2022 – September 13, 2021 - \$113,981.56

Motion by Mike Markowski/Tim Guiles to approve the warrant of September 13, 2021, in the amount of \$113,981.56. **The motion passed unanimously.**

10. Adjournment

Motion by Mike Markowski/Tim Guiles to adjourn the Select Board meeting at 7:29PM. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant
Recording Secretary