

Brandon Select Board Meeting March 28, 2022

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

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

Others in Attendance: Bill Moore, Bernie Carr, Sue Gage, Jack Schneider, Ruth Walker, Shirley Markland, Jeff Haylon, Jim Emerson

Other In Attendance Via Zoom: Dave Atherton, Richard Jamros, Brian Breslend, Angelo Lynn

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order by Seth Hopkins, Chair at 7:03PM.

a) Agenda Adoption

Motion by Tracy Wyman/Mike Markowski to adopt the agenda as presented. **The motion passed unanimously.**

2. Approval of Minutes

a) Select Board Minutes – March 14, 2022

Motion by Tracy Wyman/Mike Markowski to approve the March 14, 2022 minutes. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Seth Hopkins requested clarification in Police Chief Kachajian's report when talking about the funding of the police dog that the check Mr. Hopkins provided was from the Brandon Masons.

3. Town Manager's Report

Dave Atherton provided the following report:

. The BRD #1 and BRD #2 connection went out to bid on March 21st. The bid opening will be April 5th at 2:00PM.

. Mr. Atherton had a meeting with ANR and N. E. Woodcraft to discuss the stormwater mitigation project next steps and the possible need for more funding, if needed. ANR agreed to cover any cost overruns on this project.

. Mr. Atherton attended the March 23rd DRB hearing for the WWTP upgrades. Aldrich & Elliott did a quick presentation about the project. There was no public presence and no party status requests. It is still the intent to have this go out to bid within the month.

. Mr. Atherton has been looking at the upcoming projects and has created a simple spreadsheet showing the projects and their funding sources. He would like to ask the Select Board to review this and add it as an agenda item for the next Select Board meeting to discuss further funding ideas and options that would cover all of these projects.

. An appraiser has been picked for the three new buyout properties on Newton Road. They are hoping to have the appraisals completed by mid-April.

Rec Department News:

Bill Moore read the following Rec Department News:

. Mom Prom is back. A “Ladies Only” event for the first 2 hours, this very popular event is back after a 2-year break. April 9th from 8PM to 11PM at the Brandon Town Hall.

. Rusty DeWees comes “Down from the Mountain” to bring his comedy to the Brandon Town Hall on April 16th @ 7PM. Tickets available at Brandonrec.com.

. Our summer program planning is heating up. On tap: Theatre Camp with Jeff Hull, Swimming Lessons with Jake Jacobs, Joseph Sloma Trailblazers and more. Stay tuned for our summer flyer.

4. Public Comments and Participation

Sue Gage stated the school election revote will be on April 26th at the Brandon American Legion from 10AM to 7PM. Voting will be in-person or people can request an absentee ballot from the Town Office or they can vote early at the Town Office. Bill Moore stated there will be an informational meeting on April 25th that will be via zoom. Information on the meeting is available on the RNESU website.

5. Presentation of the Preliminary Design of the Union Street Sidewalk Reconstruction Project

Brian Breslend of Dubois & King noted he was present to obtain comments and concerns from the residents and Select Board prior to moving ahead on the design process and coming up with alternatives. Due to the use of federal funds, at least two public meetings are required. Mr. Breslend had provided a map of the proposed project and noted what is in red is the general area that would be reconstructed sidewalk from Church Street to the town center and end where the Segment 6 sidewalk starts. The offset will vary depending on the design decided. Mr. Breslend prefers offset where the curbing will begin, but this has not been decided upon yet. The next steps are coming up with alternatives, obtaining public comment and reaching a consensus. That design would then be advanced further. Shirley Markland of 15 Union Street noted concern with the west side of Union Street as the sidewalk is very broken up and hard to negotiate. Ms.

Markland asked what the time is for the project and how it will affect the driveways. She also noted the proposed project area appears to be getting close to her porch. Mr. Bresland advised VTrans has provided guidance and they are saying it could take 4 to 5 years until construction. It would depend on variables such as right of way acquisitions and utility impacts but thought it might be next year or the following. There will need to be some driveway regrading. In terms of the offset, which can vary and it will more than likely reconstruct at the existing sidewalk location, but this needs to be determined. There will be right of ways that will need to be done like Segment 6 and each property will be contacted. Dave Atherton stated there are a lot of temporaries but he did not think there would be a lot of permanent right of ways, but that will need to be determined. Ms. Markland asked about the curb stop for the town water and noted when they surveyed, she did not think they identified this and is concerned in terms of the water pipes. Further up Union Street, the grade is very strange and the driveways are bad in terms of their angles. Ms. Markland stated one has to go out in the road to avoid ice on the sidewalk because of the angles and there is not a lot of space for leveling that area. She noted the sidewalks angle towards the street while the driveways also go downhill. Mike Markowski stated he has put in miles of new sidewalks and there is always a way to regrade everything and there is not usually a lot of space. Sidewalks have to be ADA compliant and the grade on the driveways may need to be carried further back. Ms. Markland noted there are also some marble retaining walls. Tim Guiles suggested that as the project gets further along in the design that Ms. Markland also express her concerns at that time. She noted it is more how to make the sidewalk safer than it is now. Dave Atherton stated that is the goal to make the sidewalk safer and ADA compliant. Mr. Atherton noted the Board had already approved moving forward with the project and he will bring the final plans before the Board for signature once developed.

6. Certificate of Highway Mileage

Seth Hopkins stated the only change in the document is declassify a portion of Steinberg Road, a little under a half mile that has gone from a Class 4 road to a legal trail.

Motion by Brian Coolidge/Tracy Wyman to approve the Certificate of Highway Mileage with the one change. **The motion passed unanimously.**

7. Consider Unsung Heroes Day Suggestion

The Board received a suggestion from Lyn Des Marais regarding a suggestion of hosting an Unsung Heroes Day to celebrate Brandon's unsung heroes during Segment 6 and COVID. Mr. Hopkins read Ms. Des Marais' email regarding this suggestion. Mr. Hopkins advised he had asked Bill Moore if he would be willing to organize this event. Mr. Moore stated it is a good idea and he would be happy to work with Colleen Wright to do something in late-August or early-September. Mr. Moore will reach out to Ms. Des Marais to discuss the event. It was the consensus of the Board for Bill Moore and Colleen Wright to move forward with this idea.

8. Consider Establishment of Brandon Community Fund

Sue Gage stated the Town had some funds in CD's that came due in mid-March and advised that the rates are not favorable unless going to a big bank. She noted it would be good to use the funds in the community somehow, like a revolving loan fund for residents. Ms. Gage has

discussed with a banker about the middle group of people that have difficulty buying homes. She suggested possibly taking some ARAP funds to assist people and noted it would keep the funds in perpetuity and could provide funds for things like a solar installation, or other energy programs. Tim Guiles stated the Town would get more than the CD rate and the townspeople would have a lower interest rate than from a bank. Jim Emerson stated the Brandon Energy Committee had discussed the development of a fund for energy and solar, and he would like to see something like this fostered. Ms. Gage noted there is a Vermont Community Fund but thought the Town could potentially start its own fund as there is a real need in this area. Seth Hopkins stated this would need some study and suggested a working group of Select Board members, Town Treasurer, Economic Development Officer and Town Manager to do research and come back to the Select Board with a recommendation. Mr. Hopkins noted Mr. Atherton has submitted a number of public works project that would require ARPA funding. Mike Markowski and Tim Guiles volunteered to serve on the committee. Jeff Haylon suggested it would be good to consider renters to promote home ownership.

Motion by Tracy Wyman/Brian Coolidge to appoint Mike Markowski and Tim Guiles to serve on a working group with the Town Manager, Town Treasurer, and Economic Development Officer to research the possibility of implementing a Brandon Community Fund. **The motion passed unanimously.**

9. Consider Expansion of the Energy Committee

Seth Hopkins stated the current Energy Committee is Jim Emerson, Jack Schneider, Lowell Rasmussen and Robert Black. In the past, the Energy Committee has had five members. Jim Emerson stated they are in need of more people power. Mr. Hopkins noted there has been two Brandon residents that have expressed interest in joining the Committee that would bring the number of participants to 6. Mr. Emerson suggested expansion of the Energy Committee up to 10 people. Bill Moore stated there can be quorum issues with a large committee. Mr. Emerson suggested expanding to 7 members at this point.

Motion by Tim Guiles/Tracy Wyman to expand the Energy Committee to 7 members. **The motion passed with one “No” vote – Brian Coolidge.**

Brian Coolidge noted concern with the issue of a quorum.

10. Energy Committee Appointments (Terms are Indefinite)

- Jeffrey Cohen

- Jeff Haylon

Motion by Tim Guiles/Mike Markowski to appoint Jeffrey Cohen and Jeff Haylon to the Energy Committee. **The motion passed with one abstention – Brian Coolidge.**

It was noted there is still one vacancy on the Planning Commission.

11. Fiscal

a) Warrant – March 28, 2022 - \$68,032.84

Motion by Tracy Wyman/Brian Coolidge to approve the March 28, 2022 warrant in the amount of \$68,032.84. **The motion passed unanimously.**

b) Warrant for Library Grant – March 28, 2022 - \$6,871.25

Motion by Brian Coolidge/Mike Markowski to approve the Library Grant warrant in the amount of \$6,871.25. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Seth Hopkins requested clarification of the Library Grant warrant. Dave Atherton reported this is a pass-through item as the Library had to apply for the Community Development Block grant through the municipality. The funds do not come out of the Town's fund but the Town is the grant administrator for the Library. Mr. Atherton stated the reason for the negative number is the Town had paid for an invoice and the funds are now coming back to the Town.

Mr. Hopkins stated there was an article in the newspaper on Wayne Kingsley who had received passed and asked for a moment of silence in recognition of his service to the Town.

Jim Emerson asked when the ARPA funds use may be discussed again. Seth Hopkins advised it will be a fairly intermittent discussion over the next several weeks. Mr. Emerson would like to revisit the idea of a solar project that would support the Town and save money for taxpayers. Mr. Hopkins stated the VLCT came to the position that the treasurer's offer of a standard revenue loss figure is applicable to most municipalities. Now instead of ARPA funds segregated to items like broadband and wastewater, it is now more like general government funds. The Board will re-open the ARPA discussion as some of the items disqualified because of the previous ARPA requirements did not make them allowable. The new standard makes them allowable expenditures. Dave Atherton has identified work with the infrastructure and the Select Board has obligated some ARPA funds. They have also assisted with a match for a separate broadband fund, the water connection for BRD #1 and BRD #2, and funding for the Newton Road pump station. There is a need to have more discussion but there is not a time pressure. Mr. Hopkins stated at the next board meeting there will be information provided by the Town staff. Mr. Emerson asked if there is directive to use the ARPA funds to benefit the largest number of people for the longest time. Mr. Hopkins confirmed that is the intent of the Board to benefit the broadest number of people in Town.

12. Adjournment

Motion by Brian Coolidge/Tracy Wyman to adjourn the Select Board meeting at 7:51PM. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant
Recording Secretary