

Brandon Select Board Meeting July 25, 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, Tracy Wyman, Mike Markowski

Others in Attendance: Dave Atherton, Abigail Spiegelman, Auggie Norris, Molly Kennedy, Stephanie Jerome, Bernie Carr, Dave Roberts, Mat Clouser, Tom Kilpeck, Sandy Mayo

Other In Attendance Via Zoom: Bruce Jensen, Marielle Blais, Adam Murach, Sherry Vaccarella

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order by Seth Hopkins, Chair at 7:02PM.

a) Agenda Adoption

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

2. Approval of Minutes

a) Select Board Meeting Minutes – July 11, 2022

Motion by Brian Coolidge/Tracy Wyman to approve the July 11th Select Board meeting minutes as submitted. **The motion passed with one abstention – Mike Markowski.**

3. Town Manager's Report

Dave Atherton provided the following report:

The pre-bid meeting for the 389 Newton Road demolition was held on July 19th. Five contractors attended and Mr. Atherton is already receiving bids. The bids will be opened on July 28th.

Work is continuing on the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan with the RRPC. It is planned to present the Hazard Identification & Vulnerability Assessment at the August 8th Select Board meeting.

Mr. Atherton had a zoom meeting with the Library and their engineer to discuss the next steps in their application for another Community Development Grant for ADA accessibility

in the library expansion. The Town will continue to act as the pass-through and grant manager for the new grant.

The final plans and supporting documents for the Union Street sidewalk project have been submitted to VTrans for review.

The Highway Department has been very busy around Town with many projects. Here are a few of their recent projects:

- Installation of a new drainage culvert to divert stormwater on River Street that has been an area of concern for some time. It was reviewed today after the rain and it appears to be doing its job.
- Installation of reflective strips on the crosswalk signs so vehicles can see them more clearly.
- Replaced many of the outdated road signs, specifically the Route 7 and Route 73 guide signs and arrows.
- Road grading and ditch mowing has been non-stop this summer.

Rec. News:

The Brandon Carnival starts Thursday with some of the events to be wrestling Thursday night, "One for the Road" cover band Friday night, a trivia contest on Saturday and a petting zoo from a local farm on Sunday. The hours will be 5PM to 10PM on Thursday and Friday, Noon to 10PM on Saturday and Noon to 5PM on Sunday.

4. Public Comments and Participation

Tim Guiles noted the Energy Committee recently had a discussion about the Town's groundskeeping equipment and noted it would be helpful to have an inventory of both the electric and gas-powered equipment owned by the Town. Dave Atherton noted the Town has an electric weedwhacker and push mower and a gas-powered Z-turn mower. Mr. Guiles questioned when he will receive the last of the data for the Green Fleet report. Mr. Atherton noted the Town's staff is very busy with year-end work and will get the information to him as soon as possible.

Tim Guiles asked about the availability of a heating grant. Stephanie Jerome advised that it is not available at this point. Dave Atherton has had a discussion with Dennis Marden about the possibility of installing heat pumps at the Town Hall and the Town will be obtaining quotes for this project. Mr. Atherton noted the grant could probably be used for this project. Mr. Guiles also noted in the information received from the VLCT that there are new equity resources and VLCT is looking to find fifteen towns for a data collection exercise. The application deadline for this exercise is the end of August. Mr. Atherton has talked with Sue Gage about this subject. Mr. Guiles noted he would like to be involved as a member of the Town for this exercise.

Sherry Vaccarella stated there is an area near the Congregational Church that collects water and asked if there is consideration in making a change as it holds water for days. Dave Atherton

reported engineers have looked at this area and there is a design flaw. Casella tried to fix it. The Town is aware of this issue and it is hoped to get it fixed before winter.

Dave Roberts thanked Mr. Atherton for helping to champion the grant for the Brandon Library and asked if there is any update on the Park Street parking. Mr. Atherton advised there has not been any action to date, but it is planned to do some pavement markings.

Molly Kennedy reported the Brandon Library is having a challenge with threats against a staff member. Ms. Kennedy has spent a month dealing with the mental health agencies in an effort to see how the individual can be better supported. Ms. Kennedy provided a copy of the incident report to the Select Board. She noted there is a member of the community that is supposed to be supported by Rutland Mental Health, but the person is not being cared for. Ms. Kennedy asked the Select Board's assistance in reaching out to Monica White at the State level and the CEO of Rutland Mental, Dick Courcelle. The State's Attorney attended a recent meeting and the Police Chief has been assisting in this effort. The library is looking into purchasing a camera system. Ms. Kennedy noted she has not been able to do library work for 25 days and she hopes the Select Board could put some pressure on these agencies so that this person can live in the community safely. It was noted the individual has been charged with assault in the past. Stephanie Jerome spoke to Ian Sullivan, acting State's Attorney who is aware of the situation. Her role is to bring this issue to the attention of the Department of Aging and Independent Living to assure they are aware of this situation. Ms. Kennedy thinks it would be helpful for the Select Board to write two letters; one to the State and one to Rutland Mental Health to afford some accountability. It is hoped the Library will not have to close due to this situation. Stephanie Jerome asked the Select Board copy her on the correspondence that they send to the agencies.

Tim Guiles proposed a working group to create the two letters and find a way to be supportive of this issue. Dave Atherton stated there has been a lot of work with this individual from the Police Department over the years and it is a concerning matter.

Dave Roberts noted this person is 6'3" and 350 pounds and is very mean. He has assaulted four officers in Rutland and staff at the emergency room at the Rutland Hospital. He sexually assaulted a care giver and was arrested and released in the care of Rutland Mental Health. He has been deemed incompetent to stand trial and has threatened to rape someone at the Library. The person lives 450 feet from the Library and is currently living alone and unsupervised. It is an impossible situation for the Library to maintain its services as they are down to two staff members. There has been an effort to hire a private security guard, but it is cost prohibitive at \$67/hour. The Rutland and Addison Sheriff Departments have also been contacted but there is no one available. Legal counsel has been obtained. Mr. Roberts noted this person did not choose to be disabled and it is the responsibility of Rutland Mental Health to take care of this person, but the system is not set up to handle a large person that is mean. The Police Department has been to his apartment 90 times since 2013, that requires both the police and ambulance service to answer the calls. This is an unsustainable situation for the Library and the Town and has disrupted the Library community for the last 21 days.

It was the consensus of the Board to have a working group of two Select Board members to draft a letter in hopes that this will raise the awareness to a level that will get a response to resolve this issue.

Seth Hopkins has been asked to send a congratulatory letter to Will Kasso Condry as the recipient of The Vermont Prize. Mr. Atherton advised that Mr. Condry received the award for the murals he has created. Stephanie Jerome noted this prize is an initiative created by a group of art organizations and it is a great accomplishment for Mr. Condry. Ms. Jerome stated it would be good for the Select Board to acknowledge accomplishments of community members.

Motion by Tracy Wyman/Tim Guiles to approve the Board Chair crafting a letter of congratulations on behalf of the Select Board to Will Kasso Condry for being awarded The Vermont Prize. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Stephanie Jerome noted the primary is scheduled for August 9th and there are some very important races. Ms. Jerome encouraged everyone to vote either by absentee ballot or in-person. Ms. Jerome advised she will be running for reelection.

Sandy Mayo noted she received a response from the Select Board from a letter that she had written to them. She would like to get more information from the Secretary of State on this subject to see if there is a pathway to have more discussion to obtain an amicable solution. Seth Hopkins encouraged Ms. Mayo to pursue this option and thanked Ms. Mayo for bringing it to the Select Board's attention. The Board understands her concern about the offensive sign. Ms. Mayo will report back to the Board the response she receives from the Secretary of State.

5. Health Officer Appointment

Seth Hopkins noted there has been a letter of interest received from Abigail Spiegelman to serve as Brandon's Health Officer. Mr. Hopkins thanked Tom Kilpeck for the time that he has given to this position. Dave Atherton stated this position was posted on Front Porch Forum, but no other letters of interest were received. Mr. Atherton advised that Ms. Spiegelman is an Emergency Preparedness Specialist for the State and recently moved to Brandon. She has been assisting Mr. Atherton with the Local Hazard Mitigation plan and has a lot to offer with updating the Local Emergency Management plan. Mr. Atherton felt this appointment is a great fit with her expertise in that field. It was noted the State appoints this position for a term of three years. Ms. Spiegelman noted she is excited to be the Town Health Officer and to become more involved with the community. Mr. Hopkins stated this is an important job and it is important to have someone who has experience.

Motion by Tim Guiles/Mike Markowski to appoint Abigail Spiegelman as Brandon's Health Officer according to the State's statutory term. **The motion passed unanimously.**

5. Fiscal

- a) Warrant FY 2021/2022 – July 24, 2022 - \$45,108.15**
- b) Warrant FY 2022/2023 – July 25, 2022 - \$164,144.51**

Motion by Tracy Wyman/Mike Markowski to approve the 2021/2022 warrant in the amount of \$45,108.15 and the 2022/2023 warrant in the amount of \$164,144.51. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Tim Guiles questioned if the dog cage warrant was funded by the money raised for the program. Dave Atherton confirmed that it was. Mr. Guiles questioned the warrant for tree work. Mr. Atherton advised some of the trees from the Route 7 project were under warranty and some were not. The trees relating to the Route 7 project are now the responsibility of the Town and are no longer under warranty.

Seth Hopkins noted Brandon's Wednesday concert this week will be Deb Brisson and the Hayburners.

Bernie Carr noted the Town-wide Yard Sale will be August 6th and sign up can be done through this week at Carr's or through the Chamber.

Dave Atherton stated there are signs throughout the parks that indicate the individuals who have volunteered to maintain the flowers in the parks. Stephanie Jerome advised Robin Kent, Cindy Thomas and Ed Thomas created the signs, and Sarah Patis has coordinated the care of the flowers throughout the Town. Mr. Atherton has received several compliments about the Town.

The Select Board recessed at 7:36PM.

The Select Board reconvened at 7:44PM.

Motion by Tracy Wyman/Mike Markowski to enter into executive session at 7:44PM for the appointment or employment or evaluation of a public officer or employee per 1 V.S.A. 313(3)(a)(3) to include the Town Manager. **The motion passed unanimously.**

6. Executive Session

The Board came out of executive session at 8:14PM.

Motion by Seth Hopkins/Mike Markowski to set \$25.00 as the Police Department floor wage. **The motion passed – 3 yes to 2 no.**

Motion by Mike Markowski/Tracy Wyman to enter into executive session at 8:15PM for the appointment or employment or evaluation of a public officer or employee per 1 V.S.A. 313(3)(a)(3). **The motion passed unanimously.**

7. Executive Session

The Board came out of executive session at 8:23PM.

Motion by Mike Markowski/Brian Coolidge to accept the contracted agreement with the Town Manager. **The motion passed unanimously.**

11. Adjournment

Motion by Brian Coolidge/Tracy Wyman to adjourn the Select Board meeting at 8:24PM. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant
Recording Secretary