

**Brandon Select Board Meeting  
September 25, 2023**

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

**Board Members In Attendance:** Tracy Wyman, Brian Coolidge, Tim Guiles, Heather Nelson, Cecil Reniche-Smith

**Others In Attendance:** Seth Hopkins, Bill Moore, Ralph Ethier, Jeff Dardozzi, Neil Silins, Doug Bailey, Marielle Blais, Bernie Carr, Jan Coolidge, Steven Jupiter, Frank Briscoe, Joy Marcotte, Jim Emerson

**Others in Attendance via Zoom:** Jack Schneider, Tricia Welch, Barbara Smith-White, Bruce Jenson, Nita Hanson, Thomas Kilpeck, Paul Marr-Hilliard

**1. Call to order**

The meeting was called to order by Tracy Wyman - Board Chair at 7:02PM.

*a) Agenda Adoption* – **Motion** by Cecil Reniche-Smith/Heather Nelson to adopt the agenda. **The motion passed unanimously.**

**2. Approval of Minutes**

*a) Select Board Meeting Minutes – September 11, 2023*

**Motion** by Cecil Reniche-Smith/Brian Coolidge to approve the minutes of the September 11, 2023, Select Board meeting as amended. **The motion passed with one no vote – Tim Guiles.**

A correction to Heather Nelson’s name in the Agenda Adoption motion.

**3. Town Manager’s Report**

A Town Manager’s report was provided by Seth Hopkins and is available for viewing in the Board packet on the Town’s website.

Mr. Hopkins highlighted the following from his submitted report:

Jackie Savela has been working on payment plans for delinquent taxes, water, and sewer and approximately \$70,000 has been collected since the last meeting and payment plans have been scheduled. There was time spent working on the parking lot grant that has been submitted and the Town will find out soon about this item. The McConnell Road Structures grant will be held off until the next grant cycle noting the Town is 21<sup>st</sup> in the ranking for the grant and they only funded 17 grants this cycle. The Town will look to re-apply during the next cycle.

Doug Bailey stated as a Brandon resident he likes seeing the parking lot finished as it had been a while since going to the voters regarding this property. It took a long time to get to the finished stage, but it looks nice and is great downtown parking.

Jan Coolidge questioned the status of the Arnold District Road. Seth Hopkins reported the rebuild has been done, but when the flooding happened, the project was suspended. The road paving company has advised it will be completed in the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> week of October.

**4. Rec Director’s Report**

A Rec Directors report was provided by Bill Moore and is available for viewing in the Board packet on the Town’s website.

Bill Moore provided an overview of his report:

. Planning for winter basketball has begun. Attended two meetings last week to work with regional partners around aligning goals, best practices and even more in the way of collaboration with the Pittsford Rec and Otter Valley.

. Working with those same partners to create the inaugural “Otter Jamboree” as an end of the year tournament for our youth soccer kids in grades 3 – 6. This will be held on October 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Pittsford Rec area.

. Thank you in advance to Arturo Mendiola for providing frame construction for “Leaf People” that are a feature of Harvest Fest (October 8<sup>th</sup>, Estabrook Park).

. A big thank you to sponsors McGee CDJR and Pockette Pest Control for underwriting the soccer jersey purchase for the U10 girls and boys teams.

. Volleyball is back on Wednesdays at Otter Valley North Campus from 6:30PM - 8:30PM. Commissioner Amber Lee will be helping people ages 16 – 99 serve up some fall and winter activity.

. Fall Trivia starts on October 1<sup>st</sup> at 6:30PM at the Center Street Bar. This popular free adult event is a multi-year collaboration with the Brandon Free Public Library.

## **5. Public Comment and Participation**

Tracy Wyman stated the time will be limited to five minutes on each subject and the ARPA discussion later on the agenda will be limited to Board discussion, noting there had been ample time for public comment over the past two years.

Frank Brisco, owner of the old high school on Seminary Hill, advised there are \$188,000 in state tax credits available for historic preservation and code upgrades. They have identified \$71,000 and requested \$40,000 of ARPA funds to help capture the \$71,000 of state credits that include façade improvements, code upgrades, and ADA upgrades to make the building safe for occupancy. If they are allotted the \$40,000, it is planned to be partially open in 2024. Mr. Brisco noted it is a resource that is begging to be reconnected to the Town. A lot has come together and he has been working with Jeff Dardozzi and is committed to having half as community-oriented space and half for housing. The goal is to provide housing for young people who want to stay in Brandon. Mr. Dardozzi provided a summary with details and facts and noted one important item they are undertaking is forming a community-based organization with the mission to bring the building online in the next five years. All members are community members around Brandon and are volunteering a lot of time to get the first phase done to transform the façade and make the main level usable. There are plans and strategies and they have raised all volunteer labor to do this. They will be presenting to the DRB on October 11<sup>th</sup> to provide the mission and vision of this space. Tim Guiles stated the initial criteria for the ARPA funds was to use them for the greatest good for the greatest number. Mr. Dardozzi stated the public benefit is the architectural building requires a unique approach and part of the building will be focused on public service and affordable housing. This will be a multi-purpose building with event space and community space available for screenings, art galleries, short-term housing for visiting artists, etc. and will be seen as a cultural hub for Brandon. It was confirmed the co-housing model will be a central community space. Heather Nelson asked if the Town would need to continue to support the building. It was noted that the intent is to build it out to support itself with revenue streams and the housing would be through a cooperative housing group. The activities could also have revenue stream projections. It was noted the building has been sitting for a long time but it is a unique building and the approach is to preserve the historic and aesthetic qualities and make it available for the community to use. Bill Moore advised he met with this group and noted Mr. Brisco is community minded as he owns all of the dog park and has made it available to the public free of charge. Barbara Smith-White requested the information that was provided during the meeting on this topic and Mr. Hopkins advised this information will be added to the Board packet for the meeting that is available on the Town’s website.

Doug Bailey suggested with ARPA funds in general that there may be time to hold some of the funds as things can happen unexpectedly and could be good to have some non-allocated funds when working on the budget.

Jan Coolidge suggested the town hall roof still be considered.

Brandon Select Board Meeting

September 25, 2023

pg. 2

## 6. Announce New Budget Committee Session

Tracy Wyman suggested letters of interest for participation on the Budget Committee be sent to the Town Manager. The Budget Committee will be named during the October meeting. Mr. Wyman noted there are two meetings in November and two in December and attendance for all of the meetings is important. Tim Guiles noted the budget meetings are public meetings and all are invited and one does not have to be on the committee to attend the meetings.

## 7. Letter of Support for Brandon Park Village LLC CRRP Application

Bill Moore advised this letter of support would be for a grant application for a private investor who is purchasing Compass Music Art Center. This gentleman would like to put 19 rental units in the building and he needs a letter of support from the RRPC and Regional Development Corporation, and an endorsement from the Town. This will create middle-income housing for the community. Heather Nelson asked if this is a separate investor from Park Village. Mr. Moore advised this is a different investor and will provide middle income/workforce housing and is separate from the current housing.

**Motion** by Tim Guiles/Heather Nelson to approve the letter of support for the Brandon Park Village LLC Community Recovery and Revitalization Program grant application. **The motion passed unanimously.**

## 8. Tax Stabilization Application for MT Associates, 9 Conant Square

Bill Moore advised MT Associates, owners of the Dunkin Donuts/Mobil Station, have asked for tax stabilization from the investment in the property. The Select Board had approved a tax stabilization policy and based on investment dollars they qualify for 10 years of tax stabilization. Cecil Reniche-Smith stated from the agreement that was part of the contract with them fulfills the agreement and is in order. Mr. Moore noted this is the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> tax stabilization the Select Board has approved and is the municipal portion of the tax bill only. Mr. Hopkins highlighted 3 instances of robust economic development that indicates people are investing that includes the old high school, the letter of support for redeveloping Park Village and what has been invested in the Park and Ride to the west of town hall. All of the policies and years of groundwork are starting to bear fruit and encouraged the community to pat themselves on the back as this is a good place to build housing, have a business, and to live.

**Motion** by Brian Coolidge/Cecil Reniche-Smith to approve the tax stabilization application for MT Associates for the 9 Conant Square property. **The motion passed unanimously.**

## 9. ARPA Allocation Discussion

Heather Nelson stated there are a handful of projects that she feels strongly about and agreed with Mr. Bailey. She suggested the town hall roof is a top priority as there has been a decade of repairing the building. Ms. Nelson also thought funding for the Estabrook Park multi-use court was important, as well as the \$40,000 request for the old Brandon High School. Ms. Nelson noted some funds could remain unappropriated as a nest egg. Brian Coolidge suggested funding the salt shed for \$175,000, sidewalks for \$200,000 and Phase 2 for the Town Farm Road for \$200,000. Tim Guiles stated when first receiving the \$1.1 million there had been a discussion of how beneficial it would be to invest in solar and produce an income to benefit the Town. At that time, it could not be used in that manner but subsequently this now can be funded. Mr. Guiles would like to suggest using \$309,000 to build a solar facility to provide income to the Town in perpetuity. The Town hall roof repair was next on his list with a guestimate of \$250,000 and thirdly providing matching funds to close out the grant for the parking lot. Mr. Guiles felt it is important to find legacy things and the roof and solar qualify for that. Tracy Wyman suggested funding a salt shed expansion, sidewalks, and existing infrastructure. Mr. Wyman noted the Town is always looking for asphalt money at the end of the budget season and the prices are increasing on materials. These funds should be considered a gift and give the taxpayers some relief from paving the sidewalks. Cecil Reniche-Smith would first allocate \$100,000 to repair and replace the sidewalks on Pearl Street and Carver Street. There was an estimate between \$95,000 to \$105,000. From the reports in town, those are the two sidewalks in the worst shape with very large potholes and people are going out into the road because mobility devices can't go down the sidewalks. Ms. Reniche-Smith would then allocate to pursuing permitting/engineering and land lease for a possible solar array. Ms. Reniche-Smith noted she is not ready to commit completely, but her

understanding from the BEC is these funds are what they would need to get the ball rolling to determine if it is possible or feasible for a town solar array. Ms. Reniche-Smith noted with the Board having until 2024 to allocate everything, the remainder she would suggest put some towards matching grants for the Union Street sidewalk as there has been an expansion for sewer and water lines and grants are available but would need matching funds. Also, the Town's 22 miles of sewer lines are going to need replacing and suggested holding some towards that effort. Mr. Hopkins noted the cost is \$1 million for one mile of sewer lines and funds could be used towards matching funds for grants.

Tracy Wyman stated when talking with some of the individuals involved in the solar project discussion, there did not appear to be a lot of interest. Tim Guiles noted Acorn, the BEC and the landowner are enthusiastic about the project. Mr. Wyman advised he spoke with the school and fire district and neither have met with the Town or the BEC and there was not great enthusiasm for partnering on a lease for this project. Mr. Wyman thought before the Town allocated \$60,000 that a meeting should take place and have all in agreement. Mr. Guiles advised the \$60,000 is to determine a design to then be able to approach the water district, fire district and the school. Jim Emerson stated the fire district wants a firm price and if the Town is committed and sets aside \$60,000, the BEC can get a lease and a price to then go to the fire district and school district. If the project does not move ahead, the money could be reallocated to other purposes.

Tim Guiles would like to see sidewalks done and is likely a good use of the money, but the salt shed would not be high on the list and the paving suggestion falls under items that are funded by taxes and he does not see this as a high need for this money. Brian Coolidge stated town infrastructure should be maintained before adding something more and there could be unknown fees relating to solar. Heather Nelson agreed with the sidewalks and noted Pearl Street is difficult to walk on the sidewalks. She also noted things that are keeping younger families in Brandon should be considered as many are going to other places. She suggested the town hall is a huge draw for the families and the number of people that benefit from this building is enormous as well as the sidewalks for people wanting to live here. Cecil Reniche-Smith asked if there are grants for the repair of the town hall roof. Seth Hopkins advised the Friends of the Town Hall have pursued grants. Jan Coolidge advised grants are limited when dealing with a historical building. Bill Moore suggested the Town could pursue grants outside of buildings and grounds and possibly replacing the roof with something that looks like slate. Ms. Reniche-Smith stated it is more beneficial to leverage for matching funds to get more money for items like the town hall roof, water lines, sewer lines etc. Mr. Hopkins advised ARPA funds could be used for a match for grants for a new highway facility but not a salt shed. Ms. Reniche-Smith stated there are few funding sources that do not have few strings attached and this is an opportunity to get as much as possible with this funding. For Carver Street and Pearl Street, she suggested fixing the sidewalks but for everything else, leveraging funds to obtain other funds. Tracy Wyman suggested it is a consensus that sidewalks need to be addressed and asked if there are others that are in dire need. Mr. Wyman suggested \$100,000 seemed a low figure. Mr. Guiles stated for Carver Street it is 916 feet on the east and west side from the Segment 6 section near the Ayrshire building. Pearl Street will likely cover all of that street. Mr. Guiles noted for clarification, 8 years ago when he moved here and added solar, he made \$13,000 worth of power and considers it wise to use the money to put into solar, as his power now is going to be free. Ms. Nelson stated of the ideas mentioned, the sidewalks have the most consensus and suggested continued discussion of the town hall roof. Mr. Wyman suggested the town hall roof is something that needs to be looked at but did not agree with spending \$220,000 to replace it with slate as there could be something done that is adequate but far less costly. Mr. Wyman suggested obtaining quotes from roofing contractors on different options. Mr. Hopkins asked if it was the sense of the Board to put out an RFP on the roof, but noted that the Town needs to determine that they would not have to pay back grants that have been previously obtained and suggested putting out an RFP for both slate or slate-alternatives. It was the consensus of the Board for the Town Manager to move ahead with an RFP for the town hall roof repair. Ms. Nelson thinks many people can reap the benefits of having this as a community center and wants the activities to continue without interruption. Cecil Reniche-Smith stated the sidewalk quote is to fix the worst parts of Carver Street and Pearl Street, but she would not be averse to getting an estimate on more to be done. Mr. Wyman suggested consulting with the Road Foreman and identify where the most beneficial places would be for new sidewalks. Ms. Nelson noted many sidewalks are not accessible for people who can't walk. It was noted there are \$569,000 of ARPA funds remaining. Mr. Guiles suggested allocating \$150,000 for sidewalks and Ms. Reniche-Smith suggested \$250,000 to use towards repair of sidewalks and matching funds for grants. Mr. Hopkins noted that with the Union Street sidewalk project when Mr. Atherton was town manager, he indicated although there is a 50/50 match on the project, because of all additional requirements for federal money, the Town could have done it at 100% of the cost for less money than the matched grant. Mr. Wyman suggested a figure of \$175,000.

**Motion** by Cecil Reniche-Smith/Heather Nelson to allocate \$175,000 of ARPA funds toward repair or replacement of sidewalks as identified by the Town's Highway Foreman. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Heather Nelson noted the Town has grant matches that are needed and suggested approving an amount and reserving an amount for the town hall roof repair. Tracy Wyman suggested Mr. Hopkins and Mr. Erickson obtain a concrete number for a salt shed building. Cecil Reniche-Smith suggested the \$50,000 grant match for the Park and Ride did not have a funding source and recommended approving this amount and considering the \$40,000 request from Mr. Brisco. Mr. Hopkins noted the other alternative would be to use the Local Option Tax of \$110,000 but did not recommend taking from the fund balance. The project did come in at \$99,000 in total expenses and was envisioned at \$180,000 but was done in a very cost-efficient way for the parking lot.

**Motion** by Heather Nelson/Tim Guiles to allocate \$50,000 of ARPA funds to match the grant received for the Conant Square Park and Ride. **The motion passed unanimously.**

**Motion** by Cecil Reniche-Smith/Heather Nelson to allocate \$40,000 of ARPA funds to assist in obtaining State tax credits for renovating the old high school. **The motion failed.**

**Motion** by Tim Guiles/Cecil Reniche-Smith to allocate \$60,000 of ARPA funds for a solar engineering study to allow the Brandon Energy Committee to move forward with their work.

Cecil Reniche-Smith stated it was helpful for the clarification to get the ball rolling and if the project does not happen, the Town is not out the funds. It is enough of a benefit to the Town to spend 10% of the remaining ARPA funds to explore that. Tracy Wyman did not think the Town needed to be in the solar business and does not like the Town to have leases. Brian Coolidge did not think it is up to the taxpayers to fund solar and there are other areas that funding is needed. Mr. Guiles noted both Middlebury and Bristol bought into solar power and many municipalities are exploring it and this is appropriate for Brandon to explore. Heather Nelson asked if the \$60,000 is allocated for this item and it is decided that the Town is not moving forward with the project how much money is the Town out. Jim Emerson advised if the Town proceeds and it is not decided to move forward, it will not cost the Town anything. Tim Guiles stated there is some initial money to get the process started like getting a lease option that would be about \$500. Tracy Wyman asked if there is something to solidify that it will be a cost of \$500. Mr. Guiles noted they are talking about a range of money, but there are some initial expenses to get things started. Ms. Nelson asked if this is something the Revolving Loan Fund could be used for. Mr. Moore advised this is not typically something that would be funded through the Revolving Loan Fund as that is used for gap-funding for businesses. Mr. Wyman thought the school and water district need to be on board right away with this project.

**The motion passed. (2 no votes – Tracy Wyman and Brian Coolidge)**

Tim Guiles suggested the funding for the tennis court at Estabrook Park would be another consideration. Bill Moore stated there was the idea of having an interim step to provide various activities as the resurfacing of the court with asphalt would not be in violation of the covenant and could become a multi-use court. The contractor will be sending an estimate for this project. Seth Hopkins noted the topcoat on the parking lot was \$15,000. Heather Nelson noted this is something that people are using a lot. Mr. Moore advised he has been in contact with a vendor who has assisted with a skateboard park for Middlebury. Cecil Reniche-Smith advised the Tony Hawks Foundation also provides grants for skate parks. Mr. Guiles suggested \$30,000 would be a reasonable amount to allocate for repair to fences, stripe painting for all activities and for the asphalt.

**Motion** by Tim Guiles/Heather Nelson to allocate up to \$30,000 of ARPA funds to the Recreation Department and allow the Rec Director to spend the funds as needed. **The motion passed. (2 no votes – Tracy Wyman and Brian Coolidge)**

**Motion** by Tim Guiles/Heather Nelson to allocate up to \$150,000 of ARPA funds for the town hall roof repair. **The motion failed.**

Tracy Wyman would prefer to have a total number, rather than an up to \$150,000 in the event the project came in at a higher amount and would then have to come back before the Board. Tim Guiles noted concern if the funds are undesignated, they

could shrink with the temptation to use funding during the budget season. Cecil Reniche-Smith was interested in waiting to see what numbers come back from the RFP as the Board has another year to allocate funds and did not want to rush into a decision.

**Motion** by Brian Coolidge/Tracy Wyman to cease allocating the remainder of the funds at this meeting. **The motion passed unanimously.**

There are \$254,000 of ARPA funds remaining to be allocated.

## **10. Fiscal**

### ***a. Update Blanket Payroll Authorization***

**Motion** by Cecil Reniche-Smith/Brian Coolidge to accept the new blanket payroll authorization as revised to reflect corrections to the wage schedule. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Cecil Reniche-Smith asked about the payroll update. Seth Hopkins advised there were 3 police officers that were misassigned to the wrong step, and one of Mr. Moore's Rec providers is now working on a contract basis and is being removed from the payroll.

### ***b) Warrant – September 25, 2023 - \$216,689.63***

**Motion** by Tracy Wyman/Cecil Reniche-Smith to approve the warrant of September 25, 2023, in the amount of \$216,689.63. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Brian Coolidge questioned the warrant of \$3,500 for Red Apple Storage. Mr. Hopkins reported the Town purchased a trailer for the buildings and grounds crew to use and is not for rental space. Mr. Hopkins noted the large warrant is for the Newton Road demolition that is reimbursable and the contractor will come back to be sure that grass takes on the properties. Jan Coolidge questioned the warrant for web gis mapping. Mr. Hopkins stated under resources and maps on the Town's website one can search for properties and owners and this warrant is the subscription to that service.

## **12. Adjournment**

**Motion** by Brian Coolidge/Heather Nelson to adjourn the Select Board meeting at 8:47PM. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant  
Recording Secretary