

ROCKINGHAM SELECTBOARD SPECIAL MEETING
Tuesday, April 19, 2016

Present: Lamont Barnett, Joshua Hearne, Peter Golec, Ann DiBernardo, Stefan Golec

Also Present: Willis Stearns, II, Municipal Manager; Kerry Bennett, Recording Clerk; BFADC President Chris Hackett; Greater Falls Connection - Laura Schairbaum, Scott Sharland & Deb Witkus; Boys & Girls Club - Hailee Galandak-Cochran; Windham Development Tony Elliott, Gary Smith & Charles Hunter; Sustainable Valley Group – Gary Fox; BFDDA Executive Director Mary Helen Hawthorne; Rockingham Fire Chief Denis Jeffrey; Saxtons River Fire Chief Art Smith; Pat Fowler; Deborah Wright; Joel Love; Bonnie Northup; Phae O’Guinn

Press: Joey Powers, FACT8; Tory Jones Bonenfant, Eagle Times

Call to Order: Meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. at the Rockingham Recreation Center by Chairman Lamont Barnett.

Additions to the Agenda for Routine Administrative Matters and/or Pressing Matters that will require ratification at a future meeting: None

Approve Minutes of April 5, 2016: *Peter Golec made the motion to approve the minutes of April 5, 2016 as printed. Motion was seconded by Joshua Hearne. Motion passed.*

Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda (3 minutes per person):

- Phae O’Guinn asked that the Board consider making Oak Street from the intersection of Oak Street & Green Street to the intersection of Oak Street and Atkinson Street a one-way street, repair the sidewalk and add the sidewalk as one to be plowed. Stearns reminded the Board that the direction of streets in the Village of Bellows Falls is a function of the Bellows Falls Trustees and will look into this.
- Deborah Wright noted that the Town Plan on the web site is now a huge document and is difficult to download. Wright noted that it used to be in sections and is now one document.
- Wright also asked why the Revolving Loan Fund detail was not included in the Town Report. Stearns stated that the balance sheet for the RLF was included.

Manager’s Report:

- The Highway Department will be picking up leaves and yard debris on Mondays and Fridays only. These must be in the clear bags that can be purchased at Town Hall.
- Comcast, Fairpoint and BF Fire Department are working on removing lines from the old poles and 15 of the 109 poles have been removed in the past 2 weeks.
- The State is continuing with signage along Atkinson Street, Westminster Street and Rockingham Street.
- The fire alarm system at the Blake Street Garage has failed its battery backup and likely that a new system will need to be installed and estimates are being sought.
- The riparian buffer planting approved at the last meeting will be done on May 6 with 432 trees, bushes and plants being planted on the FEMA buyout properties.
- Green Up Day is May 7. Guy Payne is the Green Up Day Coordinator.

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- The Bellows Falls Village Corporation water project on King, Lockwood, Forest and the portion of Pleasant Street between Forest and Lockwood will include street reclamation and sidewalk removal and rebuilding. This is being paid for by the water project.
- Street sweeping will begin in Saxtons River next week, weather permitting.
- The truck that backed into the TLR building causing damage happened to hit the building in the same place that was hit several years ago.
- An invitation has been received from Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation to attend their first meeting at the International School of Training on Wednesday, April 27 from 4:00 to 6:00 pm.
- The schedule of meetings, hearings and votes for the Town & Village is as follows:
 - April 30 – 11:00 am - Bellows Falls Village Trustees Public Hearing on Merger
 - April 30 – 2:00 pm – Town of Rockingham Public Hearing on Merger
 - May 3 – 6:30 pm – Selectboard Regular Meeting
 - May 10 – 6:00 pm – Trustees Regular Meeting
 - May 14 – 11:00 am – Bellows Falls Village Trustees 2nd Public Hearing on Merger
 - May 14 – 2:00 pm – Rockingham Selectboard 2nd Public Hearing on Merger
 - May 14 – to follow – Rockingham Special Town Meeting
 - May 16 – 7:00 pm – Bellows Falls Village Corporation Annual Meeting
 - May 17 – 9:00 am to 7:00 pm – Bellows Falls Village Corporation voting
 - May 17 – 9:00 am to 7:00 pm – Town of Rockingham voting

All meetings & hearings will be held at the Rockingham Town Hall with the exception of the May 17 voting, which will be held at the Masonic Temple.

Agenda:

1. Greater Falls Connection: Laura Schairbaum, Project Director, Deb Witkus, Community Outreach Coordinator, and Scott Sharland, Program Specialist, along with Hailee Galandak-Cochran from the Boys & Girls Club, were present to update the Board and the public on the ongoing efforts of these organizations. The group informed those present about the programs with particular interest and focus on youth substance abuse, tobacco use, prescription drug problems, heroin use, depression, abuse, etc. Information was included in the Board packets and is available on the website at www.greaterfallsconnection.org. Schairbaum & Witkus both emphasized that anyone interested in becoming involved should contact them. Barnett thanked the group for their presentation.
2. Bellows Falls Area Development Corporation: Chris Hackett, President, was present to request that the Board consider appointing Lamont Barnett as one of its representatives. Barnett noted that 2 members of the Selectboard – Joshua Hearne and Peter Golec – had been appointed previously and asked if either of them would consider stepping down. Hearne stated that he was facing a really busy year and would be happy to resign from this appointment. *Peter Golec made the motion that the Board accept the resignation of Joshua Hearne and appoint Lamont Barnett as a representative to the Bellows Falls Area Development Corporation. Motion was seconded by Stefan Golec. Motion passed.*

3. Sustainable Valley Group: Gary Fox, Executive Director, was present to request a letter of support from the Rockingham Selectboard to obtain grants and loans to develop a local food hub at the 30 Island Street Incubator. Fox stated that SVG is working with Our Place Food Shelf, Bellows Falls Farmers Market, Sawyers Artisanal Cheese and Healthy Harvest Network, USDA, VT Department of Agriculture, Sustainable Jobs Fund, and VT Specialty Food Association. The consensus of the Board was for SVG to supply this letter and Fox will send a draft of the letter to Barnett for signature.

4. Revolving Loan Fund – Windham Development: Barnett stated that as a tenant of the Windham Hotel he would recuse himself from this discussion and turned the meeting over to Vice-Chair Hearne. Peter Golec stated that he, along with DiBernardo, were members of the Revolving Loan Fund Committee and had reviewed 2 applications, one of which was not yet complete and the other from the Windham Development. Peter Golec stated that the Committee had approved the request from Windham Development for a \$30,000 loan for 7 years at 4% interest with 2 years of interest payments and then continuing for the remaining 5 years with interest and principal payments. In addition, a minimum of one principal of Windham Development would be required to sign a personal guarantee for the loan. Katie Dearborn, member of the RLF Committee from Mascoma Bank, noted that in speaking with Tony Elliott from Windham Development, the terms of this approval was not what was expected. Elliott gave a brief explanation of the proposal to the RLF Committee and noted that the request was for \$30,000.00 loan at 2% interest with 2 years of deferred payments then to resume full payments for the remaining 5 years of the loan. The reason for the loan was to do a feasibility study of the proposed concept. Peter Golec asked if it was the intention of the group to request additional funding from the Town. Elliott stated that it was not but would request collaboration with the Town for use of the Opera House or other town properties. DiBernardo and Hearne both stated they were in favor of this request. *Ann DiBernardo made the motion that the Rockingham Selectboard approves the loan of \$30,000.00 for Windham Development at 2% interest with 2 years of deferred payments and regular payments for the remaining 5 years and that one principal of Windham Development sign a personal guarantee for the loan. Motion was seconded by Peter Golec.* Mary Helen Hawthorne, Bellows Falls Downtown Development Alliance Executive Director, noted that this group had received both State and Federal tax credits and asked what the status of those was. Elliott stated that all State credits were used to reduce the mortgage and there were approximately \$25,000 Federal ones remaining which will be used to replace the elevator. *Hearne called for a vote on the motion. Motion passed.*

Dearborn then directed the Board's attention to a letter from the Revolving Loan Fund Committee requesting direction from the Selectboard on the management and oversight of the Fund now that the Development Office is without a Development Director or if the Board was in favor of continuing with the Fund. The Board consensus was to continue the Fund and that the RLF Policies be rewritten and Dearborn and Peter Golec will handle the policy rewrite. Barnett asked Dearborn if she would be willing to accept an appointment as temporary chair of this committee. Dearborn stated that she would. *Joshua Hearne made the motion that the Rockingham Selectboard appoints Katie Dearborn as temporary chair of the Revolving Loan Fund Committee. Motion was seconded by Peter Golec. Motion passed.*

5. Project Updates

- a) Safe Routes to School Sidewalk: June 8 is the projected start date for this project.
- b) Bridge Street Bridge: Bids were rejected by the Board at the last meeting and new plans are being drafted. It is still expected that this project will be completed by July 31, 2016.
- c) Handicap Access to Town Hall: 3 underground fuel tanks have been removed, none of which leaked. 2 of 3 bids have been received for paving.
- d) Town Plan Update – Separation of Zoning Board of Adjustment & Planning Commission: Meeting is scheduled for tomorrow at Main Street Arts at 7:00 pm and the ZBA/PC will be discussing this and be setting up a schedule for a technical update of the Town Plan. Hawthorne asked if the Town Plan that recently expired could be re-adopted until the new plan is complete for the downtown designation application. Barnett explained that the technical plan draft should be ready for the June 5 submission and assumes that Windham Regional Commission will approve this with the final technical plan completion before the September final designation application due date.
- e) Rockingham Recreation Center Repairs: Stearns stated that Ingram Construction has given a \$178,000 quote for repair. Barnett stated that if it was decided to bond for these repairs a vote could be done at the August primary. Stearns stated that the Recreation Committee be reconvened to work on this issue.

6. Selectboard Items

- a) Appointments – GFRCC representative; Waypoint Committee: *Peter Golec made the motion to appoint Ann DiBernardo as the Selectboard representative to the Greater Falls Regional Chamber of Commerce and the Bellows Falls Waypoint Committee. Motion was seconded by Joshua Hearne. Motion passed.*
- b) Development Office Discussion: Barnett noted that with the recent resignation of the Development Director the Board now has the opportunity to look at what direction this office should go in. Barnett also noted that there are current issues that need to be addressed. Bonnie North, representing Rockingham for Progress, stated that a proposal had been submitted to the board members and would like to read a brief summary. North stated that the Town should continue to fund the Development Office and a Development Director but that the Development Office be separated from the supervision by the Manager and be overseen by the Selectboard. Barnett noted that the Town of Rockingham is run by a manager form of government and Vermont State law requires that all employees be under the direction of the Manager. Barnett did state that the Selectboard could request periodic updates from the Development Director. DiBernardo felt that the Board should decide if it wants an Economic Development Office or a Community Development Office or a combination. Joel Love stated that it was his opinion that it be both and could possibly be part time. Fox noted that the Town Plan was a good template for development. Stefan Golec felt that the Board might look at giving more funding to the Bellows Falls Downtown Development Alliance to assist them. Pat Fowler requested that representatives from BFDDA be involved in the Revolving Loan Fund Committee. BFDDA Executive Director Hawthorne reminded those present that her position was 15 hours per week and she will send a letter to the

Board requesting additional funding noting that BFDDA did receive assistance from the Development Office which is now no longer available. Wright felt that this was an opportunity to develop a community/economic development office part time with public input. Barnett stated that he would not be opposed to hiring project specific people for projects such as the Robertson Paper Company but that the Manager has to be involved in these discussions. Barnett stated that he felt it important to have public input and requested that anyone with ideas email him at 802lamont@gmail.com. Stearns pointed out that in addition to the Revolving Loan Fund and BFDDA, the Development Director was responsible for the Certified Local Government, Robertson Paper, Tax Stabilization Committee, and the staffing and rehabilitation projects of the Rockingham Meeting House.

- c) Merger Discussion: Hearne noted that he had requested this item be put on the agenda to make sure the Board was prepared for the public hearings. Hearne also requested that a 5 year projection be prepared for costs relating to town-wide fire and police should the merger pass. Stearns stated that he and Chief Lake would be meeting with the Springfield Police Chief to help with these projections. Stearns also noted that there is an expectation that a lot of quality of life calls will be coming in should the merger go through and it is an unknown how this will impact the present department. Peter Golec also stated that it be verified that all present ordinances have been properly adopted. Joel Love stated that he felt the Board was approaching this as a fait accompli and he was not in favor of the merger. Hearne stated that he was not in favor of this as well but wanted the Board to be prepared to answer these questions at the public hearings. Wright also noted that the Voices of Rockingham group has a meeting on Tuesday, April 26 at 7:00 pm at Windham Antiques and is urging anyone pro-merger to attend to speak on behalf of the merger. Wright stated that she feels it is important that both sides be heard.
- d) Fire Truck Options: Rockingham Fire Chief Denis Jeffrey and Saxtons River Fire Chief Art Smith were present to discuss this issue. Stearns reminded the Board that the article approved at Town Meeting was to borrow up to \$500,000 for the purchase of fire vehicles. Smith stated that he, as well as Jeffrey, had done extensive research and met with numerous companies and there are very little in the way of used vehicles offered. Smith noted that to purchase 2 vehicles, one for Saxtons River and one for Rockingham, it would be approximately \$300,000 for Saxtons River and \$400,000 for Rockingham. Stearns asked the Board if they wished to have a special article on the ballot for August to increase the amount and the length of the loan and that this is the recommendation of bond counsel. Hearne noted that Jeffrey had indicated previously that Rockingham could wait another year and felt that the priority would be for a truck for Saxtons River. Stearns reminded the Board that the Purchasing Policy requires that this go out to bid unless the Board voted to bypass this process. Hearne stated that he felt that Chief Smith could seek the best available price and a special meeting could be held to approve the purchase if necessary. *Ann DiBernardo made the motion that the Board suspend the Purchasing Policy bid requirements and allow Chief Smith to seek out the best option for the Town. Motion was seconded by Joshua Hearne. Motion passed.*

Review Overtime & Comp Time Report: No comments or concerns.

Review Agenda Items for Next Meeting – May 3, 2016:

Green Mountain Power License to Bury
FY2016 Budget Status

Review Agenda Items for Joint Board Meeting - May 31, 2016:

Board Training – Attorney Massucco
Schedule Town-wide Tour

Review & Approve Orders, Bills & Warrants: *Stefan Golec made the motion to approve the orders, bills and warrants as submitted. Motion was seconded by Joshua Hearne. Motion passed.*

Other Business:

- DiBernardo stated that she had recently attended a meeting in Cambridge, MA and gave the Board a copy of the newsletter from Arlington, MA.
- Peter Golec asked about the poles on Route 121. Stearns stated that there has been no application to reset these poles to date.
- Hearne noted that he is asked frequently why the Bellows Falls police cruiser is outside the Village limits and although he knows the reasons and relays the answers he asked that this be publicly announced.
- Barnett asked the Board about the possibility of a solar array at the gravel pit. DiBernardo stated that the Board had previously discussed this and felt it was not in the Town's best interest, however, would be open to a new discussion. Stearns will set up a demonstration at a future meeting.

Executive Session: No executive session was necessary.

Adjourn: *Joshua Hearne made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:05 p.m. Motion was seconded by Peter Golec. Motion passed.*

Attest: _____
Kerry Bennett, Recording Clerk