

Board of Trustees Meeting
Tuesday, March 7, 2023
7:00 PM - Virtual Meeting/Open Meeting

ANNOUNCEMENT: The Village of North Bennington Trustees held its regular meeting for business on March 7, 2023 at 7:00 pm. This meeting was held by video and telephone conference only via Zoom. This is in accordance with H.681 (section 6.); addendum 01-20/Act 92

The Village Depot was closed for in person meeting. Trustees Rogers, Creedy, Patterson, and Lowary attended the meeting via Zoom.

Also in attendance via Zoom were Robert Nowak, Chief Ed Harrington, Matthew Perry, Bob Howe, and Jason Dolmetsch

Trustee Rogers opened the meeting at 7:01 PM.

Trustees Present: Tara Lowary, Scott Creedy, Matthew Patterson, Mary Rogers

Absent: Ray Mullineaux

A motion was made by Tara Lowary and seconded by Mary Rogers to approve the February 7, 2023 minutes. This was so voted by all Trustees present, Lowary, Patterson, and Rogers. Scott Creedy abstained.

A motion was made by Tara Lowary and seconded by Matt Patterson, to approve the late February warrant and to pay the bills. This was so voted by all trustees.

A motion was made by Matt Patterson and seconded by Scott Creedy, to approve the March warrant and to pay the bills. This was so voted by all trustees.

A motion was made by Scott Creedy and seconded by Matthew Patterson to accept the February 2023 Payroll warrants. This was so voted.

Treasurer's Report – In the absence of Treasurer Doug Buggee, Trustee Rogers deferred this report to a future meeting.

Highway Department- Norm LeBlanc provided a written report since he was unable to attend the meeting. Notes included a brief discussion on the progress of the road grader and its repairs. Planning for a large project on Overlea Rd is ongoing. Work will commence in the nicer weather, and the total cost may exceed the \$200k grant received for this project.

Water and Highway departments are collaborating on paving and water line work from Pleasant to Prospect St. to be done in late Spring. Public meetings will be held for all residents on those streets once plans are firmed up.

Norm invites trustees to visit the garage anytime to discuss ongoing projects.

Fire Department News – Chief Ed Harrington was present to discuss final costs on a communication App, Fluent IMS, for the Fire Department which would be on all 30 volunteer fire fighter's phones.

The App will modernize and streamline first responder communications and generate data tracking for better reporting of fire department calls. Cost for first setup is \$1200. Annual fee is \$1100. Money for the app would be drawn from the existing Fire Department Communication fund.

Trustee Patterson made a motion to approve the purchase of the new Fire Department App, Fluent IMS, using funds from the fire department communications fund. Trustee Lowary seconded and so voted by all Trustees present.

Pagers and mutual aid channels were also discussed. Chief Ed stated the channel change won't happen for some months and will fall in the 2023/24 budget. There are plans to split the cost with Shaftsbury would put the village costs around \$2500, one-time fee.

Chief Ed discussed the costs for the training/retraining classes needed for fire staff. Four are attending Tri-State workshop for a total of \$1600. Six are attending Bennington County Mutual Aid classes at a cost of \$1500. The current training budget has been fully spent for the fiscal year. Trustee Patterson suggested using the donation from the North Bennington Roundtable of \$2350 to offset the cost and raise the rest, noting the importance of such training. Matthew Perry, on behalf of the Roundtable stated that the donation is not restricted and may be used however Fire Department and Trustees deemed it needed.

Interior Fire staff must recertify twice a year, we have 8-10 interior staff. Trustee Rogers asked for more information about all training requirements to ensure adequate budgeting. Trustee Lowary asked to learn more at the next meeting.

Planning Commission-Nothing

New Business – Matthew Perry presented Vermont Arts Center's request for ARPA funds to support ADA compliant renovations to the current VAE building, including an accessible entrance for wheelchairs and an ADA compliant bathroom. Members of Sage City Syndicate were on Zoom to answer questions, but none were asked. At last year's annual meeting there was significant public support for such a project.

My Perry presented Goldstone Architecture's plans for the entrance and bathroom and believes they can stay in budget to achieve it. VAE asked for \$40,000 to be allocated from the ARPA money for this work.

Trustee Patterson made a motion to allocate \$40,000 from the ARPA fund to the VAE for the purpose of ADA compliance renovations to the building. Scott Creedy seconded and so voted.

Old Business –

- Trustee Rogers stated that ARPA reporting needs to get done by the end of April. We have spent \$342,394 of the \$508,469 we were granted.

Trustee Rogers mentioned three sub grants she has been tracking under Vermont's (MERP) Municipal Energy Resilience Program. The subgrants allow for hiring a grant writer or project manager, getting an energy audit, and plans for updating/replacing heating systems and weatherizing municipal buildings.

Annual meeting is March 21st at 7:30 in the Park McCullough Carriage barn. Trustees and interested residents may bring dessert or food items that may be safely shared.

Tabling will share information on several residential energy assistance programs including: Window Dressers, Efficiency VT, and Heat Squad/Neighborworks energy audits. There will also be materials for emergency preparedness.

The Annual LEMP needs updating by April 15th.

Mr Nowak asked about the legislative movement of independent school losing funding and if we had any power over the issue. Trustee Patterson explained a little about the situation and that it seems to have lost traction in the legislature.

Trustee Rogers mentioned that Mark Anders of the BCRC is working on possible solutions for Main St traffic calming options. His report will be delivered in June. Trustee Rogers and Norm Leblanc are investigating added stop signs to slow traffic on Houghton St near the skate park.

Scott Creedy and a motion at 8:22PM to adjourn the meeting. This was seconded by Matt Patterson and so voted by all trustees present.

Tara Lowary

Village Trustee (substitute clerk)

Village of North Bennington