

**BRATTLEBORO SELECTBOARD
TUESDAY, JANUARY 2, 2018
COMMITTEE INTERVIEWS – 5:30PM
EXECUTIVE SESSION – 5:45PM
REGULAR MEETING – 6:15PM
BROOKS MEMORIAL LIBRARY CONFERENCE ROOM
MINUTES**

Selectboard members present: Kate O'Connor, Brandie Starr, Tim Wessel, John Allen, and Dave Schoales.

Staff Present: Town Manager Peter Elwell, Assistant Town Manager Patrick Moreland, Finance Director John O'Connor, Library Director Starr LaTronica, Fire Chief Mike Bucossi, Assistant Fire Chief Len Howard, Police Chief Mike Fitzgerald, Police Captain Mark Carignan, Grants Manager Kim Ellison, and Executive Secretary Jan Anderson.

Media present: Chris Mays representing the Brattleboro Reformer and BCTV staff and volunteers.

Others present: Terry Martin, Liliana Vandertuin, Frederic Noyes, Kathleen McGraw, Wayne Estey, Avery Schwenk, Jeff Lewis, Kathleen McGraw, Solveig Kurowski, Eileen Sheppard, Adam Grinold, Franz Reichsman, Laura Sibilgia, ASL interpreters Elizabeth Fox and Janet Dickinson, and others who did not sign the attendance sheet.

Chair O'Connor called the meeting to order at 5:37pm. She confirmed that the meeting was properly warned.

Interviews were held for the Citizen Police Communications Committee (CPCC) and Fence Viewer. Terry Martin and Liliana Vandertuin were interviewed for the CPCC and Frederic Noyes was interviewed for the Fence Viewer position. When the interviews were complete, Chair O'Connor said that the Board would make appointments later in the meeting.

MOTION BY KATE O'CONNOR TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS CONTRACTS AND LABOR RELATIONS AGREEMENTS WITH EMPLOYEES WHERE THE BOARD HAS DETERMINED THAT PREMATURE GENERAL PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE WOULD CLEARLY PLACE THE SELECTBOARD OR PEOPLE INVOLVED AT A SUBSTANTIAL DISADVANTAGE. THE TOWN MANAGER AND ASSISTANT TOWN MANAGER WERE INVITED TO ATTEND. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

Chair O'Connor reconvened the meeting at 6:20pm.

APPROVE MINUTES

MOTION BY BRANDIE STARR TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM DECEMBER 14 AND DECEMBER 19, 2017. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

CHAIR'S REMARKS

Chair O'Connor wished everyone a happy new year. She remarked that the temperature was extremely cold and encouraged the public to check on the wellbeing of their neighbors.

MANAGER'S COMMENTS

Town Manager Elwell noted that one of the boilers at the Municipal Center needed to be repaired so this meeting was moved to the Library Conference Room. He said that with the extreme cold temperature there was a tremendous strain on heating systems and technicians throughout the area.

SELECTBOARD COMMENTS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

Allen noted that Hugh Bronson, a former member of the Selectboard, passed away recently. He offered condolences to the Bronson family.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Wayne Estey encouraged the promotion of arts in Brattleboro. He also provided a brochure entitled "The Portland Loo" and spoke of the lack of public facilities in Brattleboro. He suggested that the portable restrooms in the publication could provide solutions, spoke of advantages of the portable system, successes of it in other locations, and suggested considering installation of such systems. Schoales suggested that he contact the Rich Earth Institute in Brattleboro.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

FY19 Budget -

(i) Review Current Status of the Proposed FY19 General Fund Budget

(ii) Consider Matters that Remain Undecided for the FY19 General Fund Budget

Town Manager Elwell spoke of changes in the proposed FY19 Budget that had been discussed throughout several Board meetings since the staff's submission of the proposed budget on November 2. He read portions of his memo, dated December 28, 2017, which summarized pending budget considerations including changes in revenues and expenditures, undecided matters that were already included in the proposed budget, and pending items that were not included in the proposed budget. He also discussed the matters mentioned in the memo that were still awaiting decisions by the Board and possible effects on the tax rate. There was substantial discussion by the Board about several pending matters, and whether to approve them, whether to add them into the proposed budget to submit to Representative Town Meeting (RTM), and whether to omit them from the proposed budget but add the matters separately on the RTM Warnings so RTM could discuss and decide. There was also much discussion about the remaining funds in the Unassigned Fund Balance and use of such funds that may result in a balance of less than the 10% recommended guideline. Franz Reichsman cautioned that adding separate articles to the Warnings for discussion at RTM could substantially increase the length of the RTM. Without objection, but also without any formal motions or votes, the Board agreed to keep the Human Resources Professional and implicit bias training in the proposed budget, to add the following to the budget and as separate items on the RTM Warning: Green Up Day - \$300, Southern Vermont Watershed Alliance - \$1,000, Human Services Review Committee's increased recommendations of \$146,000 (up from \$120,000 from last year), and a transfer of \$20,000 from the Unassigned Fund Balance in support of construction of the Skatepark. The Board generally agreed to hold discussions on the following matters at its next meeting on January 9: aerial ladder truck for the Fire Department and possible funding options for that apparatus, adding a second sidewalk plow and labor to operate it, improve sidewalk lights on Main Street, creation of a Day Work Jobs Program, and other previously discussed capital expenditures. The Board requested additional information from staff on the Jobs Program, street lights, and the Unassigned Fund Balance.

The Board then discussed the SeVEDS request for \$3.00 per person. Adam Grinold, from Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation (BDCC), spoke about the funding request and the affiliation between Southern Vermont Economic Development Strategies (SeVEDS) and BDCC. He said that SeVEDS was an affiliate entity of BDCC and provided strategies and insight but operated without a budget, where BDCC was the entity that could build the programs and projects. He provided a copy of the BDCC/SeVEDS Annual Report and spoke about the value gained from the affiliation. He also spoke about the large return in such contributions and about contribution requests from other towns. Elwell spoke about Program Income Funds and the possibility of funding the request from program income so as not to impact the tax rate. Avery Schwenk, member of the SeVEDS Board, spoke about SeVEDS taking on a different work strategy on structural economic development and focusing on making a positive environment for economic development providing greater opportunities to grow. Laura Sibilia suggested that Program Income Funds were a good match for funding economic development but noted that other towns funded the requests through general budgets. There was further discussion by the Board about the shrinking revolving loan fund balance, Brattleboro's commitment to economic development in various other ways, such as loans to businesses and other economic development projects. The Board agreed to discuss this further after hearing the upcoming agenda item about NECCA's request for funding from the revolving loan Program Income Fund.

See "Continuation of the SeVEDS Funding Request" after the SBAP/NECCA agenda item later in the meeting for further discussion on this item.

NO MOTION WAS OFFERED.

NEW BUSINESS

Open Money Market Account at Brattleboro Savings & Loan. Finance Director John O'Connor [acting in his capacity as Town Treasurer] said that the Town's main account was held at Community Bank in an approximate amount of \$10,000,000 and yielded an annual interest of 0.18%. He asked the Board to authorize him to open a money market account at Brattleboro Savings & Loan and transfer \$5,000,000 into it, which would earn interest at 1.41%, or about \$ 60,000 more per year than it was earning currently. He reviewed proposals received from four banks and said that the BS&L account would yield the highest interest, as set forth in his memorandum dated December 18, 2017. There was a brief discussion by the Board.

MOTION BY JOHN ALLEN TO AUTHORIZE FINANCE DIRECTOR JOHN O'CONNOR TO OPEN A MONEY MARKET ACCOUNT AT BRATTLEBORO SAVINGS & LOAN WITH AN INITIAL DEPOSIT OF \$5,000,000. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

Tri-Park Grant – Accept and Appropriate. Elwell said that the Board was asked to (1) accept and appropriate a Planning Grant in the amount of \$30,000 from the Vermont Community Development Program for preparation of a Tri-Park Master Plan, (2) authorize him to execute the Grant Agreement, and (3) adopt the Grant Agreement Resolution. He said that the purpose of the grant was to partially fund a Master Plan to address the removal or relocation of certain mobile home units located in flood-prone areas in two mobile home parks owned by Tri-Park Cooperative Housing Corporation, as set forth in the memorandum dated December 27, 2017 from Planning Director Rod Francis. He said that the grant would require previously approved contributions of \$40,000 from the Town and \$10,000 from Vermont Housing and Conservation Board. There was some discussion by the Board.

MOTION BY DAVE SCHOALES TO ACCEPT AND APPROPRIATE A PLANNING GRANT FROM THE VERMONT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM IN THE AMOUNT OF \$30,000 FOR PREPARATION OF A TRI-PARK MASTER PLAN, AND AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO EXECUTE THE GRANT AGREEMENT, AND ADOPT THE GRANT AGREEMENT RESOLUTION. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

Farm Tax Stabilization Agreement – Approval for Ross Thurber & Amanda Ellis-Thurber. Elwell said that the Board was asked to approve a Farm Tax Stabilization Agreement with Ross Thurber and Amanda Ellis-Thurber, and he briefly discussed the Farm Tax Stabilization Program that was set up to assist working farms. He said that the Thurbers met the qualifications required under the Farm Tax Stabilization Program and recommended that the Board approve the Agreement. There was no discussion by the Board.

MOTION BY JOHN ALLEN TO APPROVE THE FARM TAX STABILIZATION AGREEMENT WITH ROSS THURBER AND AMANDA ELLIS-THURBER. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

Small Business Assistance Program (SBAP) Loan – New England Center for Circus Arts (NECCA). Members from the New England Center for Circus Arts (NECCA) - Jeff Lewis (Interim Executive Director), Dr. Kathleen McGraw (Board Member), Solveig Kurowski (Board Member), and Eileen Sheppard (Board Member) – were present and asked the Board's approval of a Small Business Assistance Program (SBAP) Loan in the amount of \$50,000 for 7 years at an interest rate of 3.25%. Lewis said that NECCA went through a reorganization starting on July 20, 2017 and was working to strengthen the business and earnings, to expand the program, rebuild cash reserves, and create working capital over next year. He said that the business was improving and class enrollment was increasing. McGraw noted that NECCA was an economic investment in Vermont's future. Elwell said that the loan was approved by the Small Business Assistance Program (SBAP) Committee as set forth in the memorandum dated December 21, 2017 from Grants Manager Kim Ellison and that the funds would come from the Program Income Fund which had an available balance of approximately \$150,000. There was some discussion by the Board

about the reorganization of the business, its financial situation, and the amount reserved in the Program Income Fund.

MOTION BY TIM WESSEL TO APPROVE SMALL BUSINESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM LOAN TO NEW ENGLAND CENTER FOR CIRCUS ARTS, INC., IN THE AMOUNT OF \$50,000 FOR 7 YEARS AT AN INTEREST RATE OF 3.25% WITH TERMS SET FORTH IN THE MEMORANDUM DATED DECEMBER 21, 2017, FROM GRANTS MANAGER KIM ELLISON. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

Continuation of the SeVEDS Funding Request (from earlier in the meeting) - The Board then continued its previous discussion about the funding request from SeVEDS and the balance of the Program Income Fund. The Board requested additional information from staff about the amount of funds available in the Program Income Fund and it generally agreed to discuss the matter at the next meeting after it had clarity about the available funds.

NO MOTION WAS OFFERED.

Purchase of Specialized Equipment Using JAG Grant Funds – Police Department. Elwell said that the Board was asked to award two bids in the total amount of \$11,527.50 utilizing funds from a Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) to purchase components of a ballistic vest containment system for the officers. He said that the bids were from (1) Guardian Uniform, of Springfield, Massachusetts, in the amount of \$9,987.50 for the uniform component, and (2) Jurek Bros., of Greenfield, Massachusetts, in the amount of \$1,540 for the equipment portion, all as set forth in the memorandum dated December 19, 2017 from Police Chief Mike Fitzgerald. There was a brief discussion by the Board.

MOTION BY BRANDIE STARR TO AWARD BIDS TO PURCHASE COMPONENTS OF A BALLISTIC VEST CONTAINMENT SYSTEM AS FOLLOWS: TO GUARDIAN UNIFORM, OF SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$9,987.50 FOR THE UNIFORM COMPONENT, AND TO JUREK BROS., OF GREENFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$1,540 FOR THE EQUIPMENT PORTION. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

Committee Appointments. Chair O'Connor said that the Board was asked to appoint members to the Citizen Police Communications Committee (CPCC), Design Review Committee (Alternate), and Fence Viewer.

**CITIZEN POLICE COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE FOR TERM ENDING 6/19:
STARR NOMINATED LILIANA VANDERTUIN; SCHOALES NOMINATED TERRY MARTIN.
VANDERTUIN RECEIVED 5 VOTES AND MARTIN RECEIVED 2 VOTES. VANDERTUIN WAS
APPOINTED TO THE CPCC.**

**DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE (ALTERNATE) FOR TERM ENDING 6/18:
SCHOALES NOMINATED MAYA HASEGAWA. NOMINATION CARRIED 5-0.**

**FENCE VIEWER FOR A TERM ENDING 6/18:
SCHOALES NOMINATED FREDERIC NOYES; STARR NOMINATED WENDY COLLINS.
NOYES RECEIVED 5 VOTES AND COLLINS RECEIVED 1 VOTE. NOYES WAS APPOINTED AS
FENCE VIEWER.**

Wessel noted that Terry Martin indicated interest in being appointed to the Traffic Safety Committee. Elwell said that no seats were open at this time.

There was no further business.

MOTION BY DAVE SCHOALES TO ADJOURN AT 8:45PM. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

Tim Wessel, Clerk