

**BRATTLEBORO SELECTBOARD
TUESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2020
REGULAR MEETING – 6:15PM
SELECTBOARD MEETING ROOM, MUNICIPAL CENTER
MINUTES**

Selectboard members present: Brandie Starr, Tim Wessel, Elizabeth McLoughlin, David Schoales, and Daniel Quipp.

Staff Present: Town Manager Peter Elwell, Assistant Town Manager Patrick Moreland, Recreation & Parks Director Carol Lolatte, Planning Director Sue Fillion, and Executive Secretary Jan Anderson.

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

Others present: Kathu Urffer, Frederic Noyes, Rikki Risatti, Franz Reichsman, ASL interpreters Janet Dickinson and Elizabeth Fox, and others who did not sign the attendance sheet.

Chair Brandie Starr called the meeting to order at 6:15pm. She confirmed that the meeting was properly warned.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

FY21 Proposed Budget –

- (i) *Living Memorial Park Pool House Renovation or Replacement*
- (ii) *Selectboard Salaries*
- (iii) *Solid Waste Service Alternative for Households with Diapers*
- (iv) *SeVEDS*
- (v) *Graphic Representations of Summary Budget Information*

Town Manager Elwell discussed the status of changes that the Board made to the proposed FY21 Budget and items upon which the Board had not yet decided, as set forth in his memo dated January 9, 2020. He reviewed the items that were added to the proposed budget which would increase the budget by \$22,139. He asked the Board to further discuss the five items that had not yet been decided.

(i) Elwell summarized the information provided in his memo about renovation/replacement of the pool house at Living Memorial Park. Schoales noted that renovating the structure had been discussed for years and it was not included in the current budget or long-term capital plan. He suggested adding funds to this budget to make improvements to the pool house. Elwell said that the delay was caused by other urgent matters and safety concerns taking priority in other elements in the Park, including the replacement of the refrigeration system and the roof of the skating rink which he expected would exceed \$1,000,000. In addition, he said that other facilities in the Town, such as the Public Works facilities, were in substantial need of renovation and replacement and those projects were deemed a higher priority. He agreed that the pool house was old and in need of improvements but stated that it was safe. Recreation & Parks Director Carol Lolatte spoke about the challenges in the overall pool facility and corresponding components. She suggested creating a committee to look at the pool renovation project as a whole rather than making incremental improvements that would later hamper making other improvements. She said that the pool house was “tired” and agreed with the Town Manager that safety was not a factor. She also discussed the family memories that were created around visits to the pool each summer, Frederic Noyes said that his family members were frequent users of the pool. He suggested making the pool a year-round facility possibly in a different location. He offered to join a committee to study the project. There was much discussion by the Board, including scheduling a site visit to view the overall pool facility, adding it to a list of projects to be considered in a bond in 2023, renovating pieces of the facility

incrementally, whether to add funds to the FY21 budget, and the anticipated costs of other upcoming projects at the Park and throughout Town. The Board asked staff to inquire into the costs of performing an engineering study and site planning, and then bring this matter back to the Board on January 21 for further discussion.

(ii) Elwell said that the Board discussed its salaries at the last meeting and asked for additional information. He noted that Brattleboro Selectboard members received higher pay than other Selectboard members throughout the state, with the exception of three towns. Quipp said that he asked for this discussion because salaries did not change often. He suggested that the salaries could include a general cost of living increase. Franz Reichsman, from the Finance Committee, noted that the committee researched the matter a few years ago and suggested the Board review that report. There was some discussion by the Board, and it was generally agreed that the matter would be discussed and decided by Town Meeting Members at Representative Town Meeting in March.

(iii) Elwell said that staff was asked to investigate ways for households with diapers to dispose of their diapers more often without having to pay for extra trash. He said that staff had identified a program, as set forth in his January 9 memo, where households with children or elderly members disposing of diapers could get a sticker from the Town to deliver their trash to Windham Solid Waste Management District and pay only \$3 per bag, which was the cost of a large Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) trash bag. He said that the PAYT curbside program collected trash every two weeks, so this program would allow residents to dispose of their trash more frequently. He said the cost to the Town for such a program was estimated to be between \$5,000 and \$10,000 per year. Rikki Risatti suggested providing a community dumpster. There was much discussion by the Board about the need for a diaper program and how it would be implemented. The Board generally agreed that the feedback they received from the public consisted primarily about the inequity of the PAYT program. The Board agreed to discuss the PAYT program at a future meeting.

(iv) Elwell asked the Board to decide whether to contribute to Southeastern Vermont Economic Development Strategies (SeVEDS) and, if so, how much. He said that SeVEDS requested a contribution of \$3 per resident from each town for its regional economic development efforts. He said that in the past, the Brattleboro Selectboard had offered \$2 per person and it was paid from Program Income. He said that Program Income was a revolving loan fund that originated as federal loans and had been repaid. He said the Town retained a portion of the repayment funds and was allowed spend those funds on economic development and housing projects. Wessel spoke in support of fully funding the request at \$3 per person and that the funds be paid from Program Income. He spoke favorably about the work performed by BDCC/SeVEDS and noted that the Program Income fund contained over \$400,000. McLoughlin voiced her general discontent of per capita funding because the Town generally paid higher amounts but did not receive higher benefits, and she suggested contributing \$25,000 from Program Income as in past years. Schoales countered that Brattleboro did receive a greater amount of economic services from this organization since more economic development took place in town because of its size. Quipp agreed with McLoughlin's suggestion. Rikki Risatti spoke in favor of fully funding the request because of its work to initiate climate change. There was much discussion by the Board.

MOTION BY TIM WESSEL TO FUND SeVEDS/BDCC AT \$3 PER CAPITA, TRANSLATING TO \$36,147, OUT OF PROGRAM INCOME. MOTION CARRIED 3-2 (McLOUGHLIN AND QUIPP OPPOSED).

(v) Elwell said that the Board had asked staff to provide visual graphics to assist members of the public to better understand the budget. Assistant Town Manager Patrick Moreland provided several slides with multiple pie charts depicting various aspects of the proposed FY21 budget. Rikki Risatti provided their comment about using post-consumer paper products. There was much discussion by the Board. It was generally agreed to limit the number of charts to a total of 8, and the following charts were suggested: revenues, expenses, employee salaries/benefits by department, debt service costs, energy costs, energy use, health care programs, and employee retirement costs. Elwell suggested adding 4

charts to a page in the Town Report and noted that they would be in black and white.

Elwell noted that the January 21 Selectboard agenda would contain additional budget information, including review of non-union employee salaries, and the contract with the New England Police Benevolent Association, both of which were posted on the Town's website.

Chair Starr called for a recess at 8:29pm. She reconvened the meeting at 8:40pm.

NEW BUSINESS

Proposed Handicapped Parking Space for the West Side of Main Street. Elwell said that the Board was asked to consider whether to add a handicapped parking space on the west side of Main Street in front of Duo Restaurant, as set forth in the memorandum dated January 9, 2020 from Assistant Town Manager Patrick Moreland. He said that the Town's ADA Advisory Committee made the request and unanimously approved it, and the matter was then reviewed by the Traffic Safety Committee and was unanimously approved. There was some discussion by the Board. The Board generally agreed to prepare the matter for a future ordinance amendment.

NO ACTION TAKEN.

Interim Finance Director – Contract with Melanson Heath Accountants/Auditors. Elwell said that the Board was asked to approve the contract with Melanson Heath Accountants/Auditors, who would provide an accountant/auditor to act as Interim Finance Director between the retirement of Finance Director John O'Connor and the arrival of his successor, as set forth in his memo dated January 9, 2020. There was a brief discussion by the Board.

MOTION BY TIM WESSEL TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT WITH MELANSON HEATH ACCOUNTANTS/AUDITORS OF NASHUA, NEW HAMPSHIRE, TO PROVIDE INTERIM FINANCE DIRECTOR SERVICES. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

VT Outdoor Recreation Collaborative Community Grant – Approval to Submit Application. Planning Director Sue Fillion said that the Board was asked to approve the Planning Department's application for a \$50,000 Vermont Outdoor Recreation Collaborative Community Grant from the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation in partnership with the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development to hire a consultant to help establish a consistent trail brand, develop and distribute promotional materials, and design and install signage, as set forth in her memo dated January 3, 2020. She said that no local match would be required. She spoke about the benefits of capitalizing on the Town's trail assets which would include signage, mapping, and marketing efforts. There was a brief discussion by the Board.

MOTION BY ELIZABETH McLOUGHLIN TO APPROVE THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT'S APPLICATION FOR A \$50,000 VERMONT OUTDOOR RECREATION COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY GRANT FROM THE VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF FORESTS, PARKS, AND RECREATION IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE VERMONT AGENCY OF COMMERCE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TO HIRE A CONSULTANT TO STEWARD PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE TRAILS AND FORESTS. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

Representative Town Meeting Warning Article - Connecticut River Conservancy. Starr said that the Board was asked by Kathy Urffer, from the Connecticut River Conservancy, to add an article to the Representative Town Meeting (RTM) Warning. Kathy Urffer was present and said that the article would request that RTM members approve a resolution that would be sent to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). She said that the resolution was intended to communicate to FERC the Town's concerns and interests regarding erosion issues along the Connecticut River banks in connection with the operation of the Wilder, Bellows Falls, and Vernon dams, as set forth in her memo dated January 2020, She spoke at length about the dams' relicensing process, the local concerns about erosion and damage

to the banks behind the dams, and the need for bank stabilization and other measures to prevent erosion and protect the river banks and infrastructure from being adversely affected. She said that the licenses would be reissued for a period of 30 to 50 years, so the Town's resolution was very timely. She said that the Town's resolution would only be considered by FERC during the comments portion of the licensing process. Rikki Risatti commented about the erosion affecting walkable trails along the riverbank. There was much discussion by the Board.

MOTION BY DANIEL QUIPP TO ADD THE RESOLUTION REQUESTED BY KATHY URFFER FROM THE CONNECTICUT RIVER CONSERVANCY TO THE WARNING FOR REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

There was no further business.

MOTION BY DANIEL QUIPP TO ADJOURN AT 9:16PM. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

Elizabeth McLoughlin, Clerk