

**BRATTLEBORO SELECTBOARD
TUESDAY, JANUARY 29, 2019
EXECUTIVE SESSION – 6:00PM
SPECIAL MEETING – 6:15PM
SELECTBOARD MEETING ROOM, MUNICIPAL CENTER
MINUTES**

Selectboard members present: Kate O'Connor, Brandie Starr, Tim Wessel, and Shanta Lee Gander.

Staff Present: Town Manager Peter Elwell and Assistant Town Manager Patrick Moreland.

Media present: BCTV staff and volunteers.

Others present: Arlene Distler, Lissa Weinmann, Brenda Siegel, Zon Eastes, Ben Coplan, Dick DeGray, Franz Reichsman, 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 6:00pm. She confirmed that the meeting was properly warned.

MOTION BY KATE O'CONNOR TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS THE APPOINTMENT OR EMPLOYMENT OR EVALUATION OF A PUBLIC OFFICER OR EMPLOYEE, 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 3-0 (WESSEL WAS NOT PRESENT AT THE TIME OF THE VOTE.)

Chair O'Connor reconvened the meeting at 6:15pm.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Dick DeGray announced that multiple candidates turned in petitions for the Selectboard and Town School Board so there would be a race for both boards. He thanked the candidates who turned in petitions and asked the voters to get out and vote.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Arts Fund Proposal – O'Connor noted that the Board discussed this matter at its meeting last week and asked for more information about the proposal, including identification of the entity to which the funds would be provided. She said that Arlene Distler sent the Board an e-mail today explaining the request and the e-mail was distributed to the Board members. Ms. Distler was present and explained that the request was to use 2% (or approximately \$8,000) of the funds allocated last week to the Downtown Business Alliance and Brattleboro Area Chamber of Commerce (DBA/BACC) for the promotion of the Town. She said that arts brought visitors to the town and, consequently, art projects with a public component should be supported by the Town. She proposed that a stand-alone committee be formed to review art proposals, make decisions, and administer the "arts fund." Brenda Siegel spoke in strong support of the proposal and asked that this matter be added to the Representative Town Meeting (RTM) Warning so that the constituents could decide whether to fund it. She suggested, alternatively, that the funds be added to the budget and that the Town administer the funds which would be a proper mechanism to promote arts in the community. Zon Eastes stated that the State of Washington appropriated a percentage of taxes to the promotion of arts and tourism and he suggested that the Town could hold the funds and a committee could determine how the funds were used. Lissa Weinmann spoke in strong support of the proposal. She noted that the Board allotted \$42,000 to DBA/BACC and those organizations submitted a hasty request and did not have a clear plan for the use of funds, so that should not be criteria for disallowing funds to be allocated to the "arts fund." She suggested that the Brattleboro Words Project, which had a fiscal sponsor and received donations and grants, could be the first project to use the "arts fund." Franz Reichsman suggested that the Board be consistent in allocating funding requests and that neither the DBA/BACC nor the "arts fund" contained details about spending or a

governing mechanism. He said that such allocations were not good operating standards on budgetary matters.

There was much discussion by the Board. All of the Board members spoke in support the arts in town. Wessel and O'Connor spoke about the lateness of the request and the lack of organization around the proposal and the administration of the funds. Starr spoke in favor of adding the request to the RTM Warnings. Gander spoke in support of the proposal.

MOTION BY SHANTA LEE GANDER TO ADD THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE TO THE 2019 REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING WARNING: TO SEE IF THE TOWN WILL ADD THE SUM OF \$8,424 TO THE FY20 BUDGET TO ESTABLISH AN "ARTS FUND" AND TO APPROPRIATE THE SUM OF \$8,424 FROM THE UNASSIGNED GENERAL FUND BALANCE. MOTION FAILED 2-2 (GANDER AND STARR IN FAVOR; O'CONNOR AND WESSEL OPPOSED).

Town Meeting Warnings - Annual Town and Town School District Meeting on Tuesday, March 5, and Annual Representative Town Meeting on Saturday, March 23. O'Connor said that the Selectboard reviewed the draft Town Meeting and Representative Town Meeting Warnings at its January 22 meeting and was now asked to approve the Warnings. She clarified that Article 14 (the joint request from DBA/BACC) was included in the Warning because any use of the Unassigned Fund Balance had to be approved by RTM. Franz Reichsman asked how the budget would be impacted if the article failed at RTM. Elwell spoke about the budget process during RTM. Wessel suggested that Article 14 be revised to read: "To see if the Town will join the Selectboard in expressing strong support..." The Board agreed to the modified language. There was also discussion about the School Board submitting a separate Warning for RTM. Elwell said that normally the Warnings contained articles from both the Selectboard and School Board but with the uncertainty this year around Act 46 (school merger) and pending litigation, the School Board would submit a separate RTM Warning with school articles to be discussed in the latter part of RTM.

MOTION BY BRANDIE STARR TO APPROVE AS MODIFIED DURING THIS JANUARY 29 MEETING THE WARNING FOR THE ANNUAL TOWN AND TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETINGS TO BE HELD ON MARCH 5, 2019, AND THE SELECTBOARD'S WARNING FOR THE ANNUAL REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING TO BE HELD ON MARCH 23, 2019. MOTION CARRIED 4-0.

There was no further business.

MOTION BY BRANDIE STARR TO ADJOURN AT 7:12PM. MOTION CARRIED 4-0.

Tim Wessel, Clerk