

**BRATTLEBORO SELECTBOARD  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2019  
REGULAR MEETING – 6:15PM  
SELECTBOARD MEETING ROOM, MUNICIPAL CENTER  
MINUTES**

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

Staff Present: Town Manager Peter Elwell, Assistant Town Manager Patrick Moreland, Library Director Starr LaTronica, and Executive Secretary Jan Anderson.

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

Others present: Gershom Moore, Libby Bennett, Jon Hoover, Gara Rainward, Ben Shreefter, Oscar Heller, Libby Howes, Chad Farnum, Roberta Christino, Rhianna Kendrick, Franz Reichsman, Rikki Risatti, 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 6:15pm. She confirmed that it was properly warned.

***APPROVE MINUTES***

O'Connor asked the Board to approve the minutes from the January 22 and January 29, 2019 meetings. There was no discussion.

**MOTION BY BRANDIE STARR TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM JANUARY 22 AND JANUARY 29. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.**

***CHAIR'S REMARKS***

None.

***MANAGER'S COMMENTS***

Town Manager Elwell spoke about a water pipe break on Main Street this afternoon in front of 165 Main Street. He said that it was a major break and that utility crews would likely be working into the night and early morning hours to repair the pipe and infrastructure around the break. He noted that water had been shut off along Main Street between Elliot Street and High Street. He said that the Fire Department had gone door-to-door to advise businesses and residents and Dispatch had contacted building owners. O'Connor suggested that people avoid that area while the repair was taking place.

***SELECTBOARD COMMENTS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS***

Gander noted that she would be moderating a panel on April 10 about business and compassion, which included Downtown Business Alliance and Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation. She said it was part of a series that was taking place at the library and more information would be distributed when available.

***PUBLIC PARTICIPATION***

Gershom Moore spoke of his concerns about violent acts that were taking place in town, particularly a recent incident involving a female. He suggested that violent crimes be addressed. Elwell said that the Police Department was investigating the incident and asked the public to provide any information they may have about it.

Rikki Risatti, candidate for District 2 Town Meeting Representative, asked if residents' water would be affected by the water pipe break that Elwell mentioned earlier and whether residents' water would be tested. Risatti asked the Board to commit to addressing a program to test water in private residences for people under the poverty level. Elwell spoke about the Town's policy for testing public water.

Ben Shreefter asked the Town to consider providing its own ISP (internet provider) similar to a model adopted by Greenfield, Massachusetts. Elwell said that the matter had been brought to the Board previously and would be discussed at a meeting in the near future.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

#### **Ordinance Amendments – Re-Open Second Reading and Public Hearing (continued from Selectboard meeting on January 22, 2019)**

- (i) *Chapter 16 (Traffic), Article VI (Stopping, Standing, and Parking),*
  - (a) *Section 1 (Generally), Sub-Sections 16-93 (Overnight parking), and 16-96, 16-96(a) and 16-96(b) (Parking after snowfall);*
  - (b) *Section 2 (Parking Meter Areas), Sub-Section 16-111 (Operation of meters; permitted time, etc.)*
- (ii) *Appendix C (Regulations Governing the Control of Traffic), Article III (Parking Meter Areas), Section 16-110 (On-Street Areas)*

O'Connor said that the Board was asked to continue its second reading and public hearing that it started at the January 22 meeting for the purposes of approving amendments to the Code of Ordinances regarding overnight parking in the Preston Lot during snow removal, adding metered on-street parking spaces on Frost Street (west of Elm Street), and modifying the regulation of parking in the Elm Street Parking Lot by installing pay-and-display kiosks and raising the parking rate. She said that the Brattleboro Food Co-Op submitted an e-mail just prior to the January 22 meeting objecting to the proposed amendments at the Elm Street Lot. She said that the rates would be increased and the amount of "permit only" parking spaces would drop from 40 to 20. Assistant Town Manager Moreland spoke about permit and pay-and-display parking spaces in the Elm Street Lot, as set forth in his memo dated January 28, 2019. He confirmed that 40 permit parking spaces were available in the Elm Street Lot which were sold on a first-come-first-serve basis. He noted that new businesses had located near the Elm Street Lot and had requested additional parking spaces be made available for their employees and retail customers. Elwell confirmed that the Co-Op "owned" certain spaces on the outside of the Elm Street and those spaces were not affected by the proposed amendments. He said that owners of the new businesses had approached the Traffic Safety Committee with the request to increase available parking, and the Committee voted in favor of the request and recommended that it be forwarded to the Selectboard for approval. There was much discussion by the Board, particularly about how the changes would affect the Co-Op, and about the three alternative proposals set forth by staff in Moreland's memo.

#### **MOTION BY DAVE SCHOALES TO IMPLEMENT THE SECOND ALTERNATIVE TO IMPLEMENT ALL THE PROPOSED ORDINANCE CHANGES BUT LEAVE THE NUMBER OF PERMITS CAPPED AT 40 [REGARDING ELM STREET LOT ON PAGE 2 OF MORELAND'S MEMO].**

Wessel offered a friendly amendment to split the difference in parking spaces between 20 and 40 so as to leave the number of available spaces at 30. Schoales accepted the friendly amendment. Starr said that she would be inclined to accept bulleted item 3 (in Moreland's memo) so as to avoid a sudden dramatic increase of parking costs to the Co-Op. Gander agreed with Starr. Oscar Heller, Selectboard candidate, noted that the Co-Op owned its own parking lot connected to the business and those parking spaces were available to the public for free. For that reason, he suggested that consideration be given to the Co-Op's purchase of public parking spaces. There was further discussion by the Board.

#### **REVISED MOTION BY DAVE SCHOALES TO IMPLEMENT THE SECOND ALTERNATIVE TO IMPLEMENT ALL THE PROPOSED ORDINANCE CHANGES BUT TO CAP THE NUMBER OF PERMITS AT 30 AND NOT REDUCE IT TO 20 AS ORIGINALLY PROPOSED [REGARDING ELM STREET LOT ON PAGE 2 OF MORELAND'S MEMO]. MOTION FAILED 2-3 (STARR, GANDER, AND WESSEL OPPOSED).**

#### **MOTION BY BRANDIE STARR TO IMPLEMENT THE CHANGES ON FROST STREET BUT LEAVE THE ELM STREET LOT AS IT IS CURRENTLY MANAGED, TO BE REVISED IN THE FUTURE.**

Elwell clarified that the motion should contain approval of the proposed amendments on Frost Street, as well as to the Preston Lot, but take no action related to the Elm Street Lot.

**REVISED MOTION BY BRANDIE STARR TO IMPLEMENT THE CHANGES TO THE PRESTON LOT AND ON FROST STREET, BUT LEAVE THE ELM STREET LOT AS IT IS CURRENTLY MANAGED. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.**

***NEW BUSINESS***

VCDP Grant Application and Resolution – *Public Hearing, Long Falls Paper Board*. O'Connor said that this matter was not ready for a public hearing because Long Falls Paper Board was not ready to submit its application for a VCDP grant. The matter was not discussed.

**NO ACTION TAKEN.**

VCDP Grant Application and Resolution – *Public Hearing, Groundworks*. O'Connor said that the Board was asked to hold a public hearing for the Groundworks Collaborative Project.

O'Connor opened the public hearing.

O'Connor confirmed that Groundworks was applying for a \$500,000 VCDP grant from the State and asking the Town for a \$50,000 grant from Program Income.

Representatives from Groundworks - Chad Farnum (Board President), Jon Hoover (Business Manager), and Rhianna Kendrick (Operations Director) – were present and discussed the project and proposed funding. Farnum spoke about the functions of Groundworks, including the Drop In Center where the homeless population could obtain meals and a shower, the Food Bank to provide assistance with food, the seasonal overflow shelter (SOS) with 30 beds during winter months, and the long-term shelter at the Groundworks Shelter. He said that the need for services provided by Groundworks continued to grow and that the space at the Drop-In Center (60 South Main Street) was too small to meet the current needs. He said that the Groundworks Board conducted an exhaustive search and considered numerous properties to expand, and the project now proposed purchasing the property next door (54 South Main Street) to build new facilities and to improve the existing property at 60 South Main Street.

Kendrick spoke about the plan to re-design the existing building and the design plan for the new building to be located next door. She discussed the proposed use of both spaces, including combining administration and management offices, providing necessary meeting spaces to meet with other local providers, and increasing the capacity to accommodate a population of 30 to 50 people per day. She said there was not enough funding to run a year-round shelter and the project renovations would use the available space more effectively and efficiently. She noted that the majority of community members being served were from Brattleboro and nearby areas.

Hoover spoke about the projected funding for the project, which was expected to cost approximately \$3,165,000. He spoke about various funding sources, including Vermont Housing & Conservation Board, private grants, and private fundraising. He noted that pledges in the amount of \$500,000 for the capital campaign had already been received.

O'Connor confirmed that the municipality was required to be the applicant for the VCDP grant and that staff further recommended awarding a \$50,000 grant from Program Income. She stated that funds from Program Income did not come from property taxes.

Schoales asked how long the project would be adequate before further expansion was required, whether energy efficiencies were included in the plan, and about the "program management" fee in the table of expenses in Assistant Town Manager Moreland's memo, dated January 28, 2019. Wessel confirmed that Program Income was not taxpayer's money. Elwell said that the Program Income contained a balance of approximately \$700,000. He stated that the VCDP application to the State would be stronger if the municipality contributed to the project. Members from Groundworks addressed the questions and concerns.

Elizabeth Howes, abutting property owner, requested that the existing house located at 54 South Main Street be improved, and she spoke in strong opposition to the demotion of it. She spoke of her attachment to the 54 South Main Street house and of it being an antique that contained history around Brattleboro's mercantile history. She suggested that the house be "dusted off" and "freshened up." She also suggested relocating the project to the vacant lot on Putney Road between Fast Eddie's and the Chinese restaurant, and to relocating the project to Wilmington. Hoover said that a historic review was performed on both properties and due to the condition of the house at 54 South Main Street it was not reasonably feasible to rehabilitate it. There was much discussion about the properties and the need to have services close to downtown Brattleboro. Groundworks members spoke of the historical and engineering studies that were performed at both properties and stated that some of the materials in the house to be demolished (54 South Main Street) would be repurposed into the new building.

Roberta Christino suggested that respect be given to Elizabeth Howes' attachment to the 54 South Main Street house. Christino said that she recently relocated to Brattleboro from Waterbury, CT, and was a retired teacher. She spoke of maximizing and utilizing spaces in and out of the classroom. She also spoke of her need to utilize the services of the Drop-In Center when she first moved to Brattleboro. She spoke about rehabilitating abandoned buildings and inquired whether the house would need to be demolished if State money was not accepted.

Libby Bennett, an employee at Groundworks, said that the organization addressed historic preservation and said that efforts would be made to document the building before its demolition.

Rikki Risatti said that Howes and Christino should be respected and appreciated more than the Selectboard's continuing discussions about parking, driving, and cars. In reference to the management fee, Risatti said that professionals should be paid well. With respect to the Program Income and interest payments received by the fund, Risatti said that organizations should not profit from interest on loans made from other people's misfortunes and suggested investing in people rather than collecting from them.

O'Connor closed the public hearing.

**MOTION BY SHANTA LEE GANDER TO APPROVE AN APPLICATION TO THE VERMONT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR AN IMPLEMENTATION GRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$500,000 FOR GROUNDWORKS COLLABORATIVE'S HOUSING RESOURCE CENTER PROJECT, TO ADOPT A RESOLUTION IDENTIFYING TOWN MANAGER PETER ELWELL AS THE AUTHORIZING OFFICIAL AND ASSISTANT TOWN MANAGER PATRICK MORELAND AS THE CONTACT PERSON, AND TO AUTHORIZE A GRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$50,000 FROM PROGRAM INCOME, WITH AWARD OF THE TOWN'S PROGRAM INCOME GRANT CONTINGENT UPON AWARD OF THE REQUESTED VCDP GRANT. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.**

*Close-Out VCDP Grant – Permanent Supportive Housing, Public Hearing, Windham + Windsor Housing Trust's Great River Terrace Project.* O'Connor said that the Board was asked to hold a public hearing to close-out a \$425,000 grant from the Vermont Community Development Program for the Great River Terrace Project. Elwell confirmed that the project had been completed and the grant required the public hearing, but that no further action was required by the Board. There was no discussion.

**NO ACTION TAKEN.**

*Employment Agreement with Town Manager Peter Elwell – Proposed 5-Year Extension for the Period from July 1, 2019, to June 30, 2024.* O'Connor said that the Board was asked to renew the employment agreement with Town Manager Peter Elwell and approve a new five-year contract. She said that the contract was posted on the Town's website for the public to view and would run through June 30, 2024. She said that the contract was very similar to the initial contract with the exception of deleting moving expenses and a slight wage increase. Franz Reichsman spoke in support of renewing of the contract. Rikki Risatti confirmed that the contract amount was \$102,804 for the first year. Board members thanked Elwell for his service to the Town.

**MOTION BY BRANDIE STARR TO APPROVE AN EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TOWN OF BRATTLEBORO AND PETER B. ELWELL, AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.**

Schedule Selectboard Meetings

- (i) *Informational Meeting for Town Meeting Representatives at Academy School on Wednesday, March 13 (Doors open at 6pm; Caucuses at 6:30pm; Meeting at 7pm)*
- (ii) *Organizational Meeting for New Selectboard on Monday, March 25, at 5:30pm*

O'Connor said that the Board was asked to schedule the annual Informational Meeting prior to Representative Town Meeting and the Organizational Meeting for the newly-elected Selectboard members. She said that the Informational Meeting was typically held 10 days before Representative Town Meeting, which would be on Wednesday, March 13, with doors opening at 6:00pm, caucuses beginning at 6:30pm, and the informational meeting starting at 7:00pm, all at Academy School. She said that the Organizational Meeting would be held on Monday, March 25 at 5:30pm in the Selectboard Meeting Room. She noted that Representative Town Meeting would take place in the gymnasium at Brattleboro Union High School on March 23. Rikki Risatti noted that early voting would begin on February 13 and hoped to co-host a forum so that District 2 candidates could introduce themselves to each other and discuss concerns. There was no discussion by the Board.

**NO MOTION WAS OFFERED.**

There was no further business.

**MOTION BY DAVE SCHOALES TO ADJOURN AT 8:00PM. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.**

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Tim Wessel, Clerk