

**BRATTLEBORO SELECTBOARD
TUESDAY, MARCH 6, 2018
EXECUTIVE SESSION – 5:30PM
REGULAR MEETING – 6:15PM
BROOKS MEMORIAL LIBRARY MEETING ROOM
MINUTES**

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

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

Media present: BCTV staff and volunteers.

Others present: Nick Nickerson, Terry A Carter, Anne Howes, 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 5:30pm. She confirmed that the meeting was properly warned.

MOTION BY KATE O'CONNOR TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS CONTRACTS, LABOR RELATIONS AGREEMENTS WITH EMPLOYEES, PENDING OR PROBABLE CIVIL LITIGATION OR PROSECUTION TO WHICH THE PUBLIC BODY IS OR MAY BE A PARTY, AND NEGOTIATING OR SECURING A REAL ESTATE PURCHASE OR LEASE OPTIONS 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 4-0 (STARR WAS NOT PRESENT AT THE TIME OF THE VOTE).

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

APPROVE MINUTES

MOTION BY TIM WESSEL TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE FEBRUARY 20, FEBRUARY 26, AND MARCH 1, 2018 MEETINGS. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

CHAIR'S REMARKS

Chair O'Connor announced that the voting polls were open until 7:00pm and she encouraged voters to get out and vote.

MANAGER'S COMMENTS

None.

SELECTBOARD COMMENTS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

None.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Starr LaTronica, Director of Brooks Memorial Library, welcomed the Board to the Library to hold this meeting. She announced that the Vermont Humanities Council lecture previously scheduled on March 7 (The Known World) would be cancelled due to the anticipated snow storm and said that the lecture would be rescheduled to June 6.

Nick Nickerson spoke about the difference between drug addiction treatment versus drug addiction punishment. He said that the drug arrest rate for Black people was higher than that of White people, and he suggested that the issue was one of White privilege.

Lisa Weinmann, co-owner of 118 Elliot, spoke about the "Peoples, Places and the History of Words in Brattleboro, Vermont" Project. She said it was a 3-year project in partnership with other non-profits (Brooks Memorial Library, Brattleboro Historical Society, Brattleboro Literary Festival, Write Action, and Marlboro College) who were working together to promote the history of words and printing in Brattleboro. She said that the project received a National Endowment for the Humanities matching grant and part of the project would be to create an audio tour for the community to get involved. She said that roundtable discussions were held each month and the topic to be discussed at the next roundtable discussion was Abenaki history and its history of language and words in the Brattleboro area. She said that students from various schools were doing research and creating podcasts and she invited community members to contact the project to lead research teams. She said that more information was available at BrattleboroWordsProject.org, and she could be contacted at brattleborowords@gmail.com. There was some discussion by the Board.

Terry Carter spoke about her concerns about a number of discarded tires in the wetlands near the Marina and the impact on the wildlife in that area. She said that she reported the matter to the Assistant Town Manager last year, who provided her with a link to a State agency with whom she later filed a complaint. She said that she had not received further information. She asked Board members to visit the area and asked that other community members get involved. She said that she met with Town Manager Elwell earlier in the day to continue to voice her concerns. Town Manager Elwell confirmed that this matter would be within the State's jurisdiction.

LIQUOR COMMISSIONERS

MOTION BY BRANDIE STARR TO CONVENE AS LIQUOR COMMISSIONERS. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

Festival Permit – Four Seasons Media, Inc. (WTSA), Brattleboro Brewers Festival. O'Connor said that the Board was asked to approve a Festival Permit for Four Seasons Media, Inc., to host the annual Brattleboro Brewers Festival on Saturday, May 26, 2018, from 12:00pm to 4:00pm on the VABEC (Famolare) Field located at 40 University Way. Elwell said that the organizers of the festival continued to work with the Police and Fire Departments to work out details of the festival, and he expected that the details would be worked out successfully as in past years. There was no discussion by the Board.

MOTION BY TIM WESSEL TO APPROVE A FESTIVAL PERMIT FOR FOUR SEASONS MEDIA, INC., TO HOST THE BRATTLEBORO BREWERS FESTIVAL ON MAY 26, 2018, FROM 12:00PM TO 4:00PM ON THE FAMOLARE FIELD, LOCATED AT 40 UNIVERSITY WAY. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

MOTION BY DAVE SCHOALES TO ADJOURN AS LIQUOR COMMISSIONERS. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

NEW BUSINESS

Vermont Community Foundation (VCF) Spark Connecting Community Grant – Approve Application, Recreation & Parks Department. O'Connor said that the Board was asked to approve the application for a Vermont Community Foundation (VCF) Spark Connecting Community Grant in the amount of \$3,000 to help pay for construction of a Skatepark at Living Memorial Park. There was no discussion by the Board.

MOTION BY JOHN ALLEN TO APPROVE THE APPLICATION FOR A VERMONT COMMUNITY FOUNDATION (VCF) SPARK CONNECTING COMMUNITY GRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$3,000 TO HELP PAY FOR CONSTRUCTION OF A SKATEPARK AT LIVING MEMORIAL PARK. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

Winter Road Maintenance – Discussion. O'Connor said that at the last meeting, the Board discussed the rough condition of the winter roads and noted that the winter road maintenance budget for the year had been nearly expended, so the Board asked Public Works Director Steve Barrett to address those matters at this meeting. Barrett provided a summary of the weather this year and the resulting condition of the roads due to the freeze/thaw action. He particularly focused on Western Avenue because of its heavy use, being about 13,000 vehicles and trucks per day. He discussed the State and Town's shared-responsibility for the maintenance of that roadway with State having responsibility for resurfacing the

roadway and the Town having responsible for general maintenance. He said that the State had a plan to upgrade the road but it had been delayed multiple years because of the cost the project. He discussed the patching and repaving methods and processes to temporarily repair and/or permanently remove potholes in cold weather. He also reviewed the history of the funding of the capital road improvement plan. He said that in 1996 the amount allocated for the capital roadways was \$200,000 and had been raised to only \$250,000 for FY18. There was much discussion by the Board, including the possibility of overages in the operating budget this year.

NO ACTION TAKEN.

Tax Implications of Act 46 Merger on Brattleboro Property Tax – Proposed Letter to Vermont State Board of Education & Vermont Agency of Education. Selectboard Member Dave Schoales asked the Board to consider sending a letter to the State Board of Education and the Agency of Education seeking their approval of the Alternative Governance Structure application submitted by local school boards, school board members, and concerned citizens. He discussed a recent vote where the voters rejected by 2-to-1 the school district consolidation as proposed in Act 46. He said that the schools would need to develop their own proposal to merge or the State would impose a model. He said that an Alternative Governance Structure Committee, consisting of members from the former Dummerston, Vernon, Brattleboro, Putney, and Guilford School Boards, was formed and tasked to show that a merger may not be possible or was not the best model. He provided a spreadsheet and discussed at length the calculated financial impacts on towns' tax rates over the past three years if the school districts had merged. He also discussed the many inequities that would be imposed on Brattleboro with its highest poverty rates and most underserved population, the higher tax rate that would be imposed, and the shifting of resources to other surrounding towns. There was much discussion by the Board, including the complexity and confusion of Act 46, the conflicting positions provided to the State Agency of Education by the Act 46 Study Committee and the Alternative Governance Committee, and the need to respect the democratic process without taking sides between the two committees' opinions. The Board asked Schoales to draft a letter of support after Representative Town Meeting and to bring the matter to the Board for discussion at a later date.

NO ACTION TAKEN.

O'Connor reminded Town Meeting Members and the public about the pre-Town Meeting Informational Meeting scheduled on Wednesday, March 14 at Academy School. She said that caucuses would take place starting at 6:30pm to fill open seats in Districts 1, 2 and 3.

There was no further business.

MOTION BY JOHN ALLEN TO ADJOURN AT 7:25PM. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

Tim Wessel, Clerk