

**BRATTLEBORO SELECTBOARD  
TUESDAY, MAY 5, 2020  
REGULAR MEETING – 6:15PM  
HELD REMOTELY VIA GoToMeeting  
MINUTES**

***NOTE: Per the “Stay Home – Stay Safe” order issued by Governor Scott on March 13, 2020, this meeting was held remotely with no physical location using GoToMeeting.***

Selectboard members in attendance: Tim Wessel, Elizabeth McLoughlin, Ian Goodnow, Brandie Starr, and Daniel Quipp.

Staff participating: Town Manager Peter Elwell, Assistant Town Manager Patrick Moreland, Town Clerk Hilary Francis, Public Works Director Steve Barrett, Highway/Utilities Superintendent Dan Tyler, and Executive Secretary Jan Anderson.

Others participating: Tom Costello, Stephanie Bonin, Kate O'Connor, Christina Haskins, ASL interpreters Elizabeth Fox and Janet Dickinson, and BCTV staff and volunteers.

Chair Tim Wessel called the meeting to order at 6:15pm. He confirmed that the meeting was properly warned.

***APPROVE MINUTES***

Wessel asked the Board to approve the minutes from the April 21, 2020 meeting. There was no discussion.

**MOTION BY IAN GOODNOW TO APPROVE MINUTES FROM THE APRIL 21 MEETING. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.**

***CHAIR'S REMARKS***

Chair Wessel noted that he had noticed many examples of strength and kindness in the community during the COVID-19 pandemic and he thanked community members for their patience.

***MANAGER'S COMMENTS***

Town Manager Elwell spoke about the vandalism to the Veterans' Memorial Monument on the Brattleboro Common last weekend. He said that BAMS (Brattleboro Area Middle School) students had worked recently with their teacher, Joe Rivers, and the Brattleboro Historical Society and discovered that the list of soldiers' names on the Civil War Monument was incomplete and did not represent all of the Brattleboro residents who died in the war. He said it was initially thought that only men of color were omitted from the list, but further research determined that white men of limited means were also omitted, so the omissions seemed to be related to racism and classism. He said that additional research was needed to determine a full and complete list of those soldiers, and a collaboration of veterans' groups, students, and community members would work together to correct the omissions. He said that the vandalism was likely in response to some of the omitted names. There was a brief discussion by the Board.

***SELECTBOARD COMMENTS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS***

McLoughlin spoke of many nonprofit organizations and community members who were working to meet the needs of the community in various ways during this pandemic era. She mentioned initiatives that were available, as well as the need for volunteers and donations. She suggested contacting Brattleboro Area Mutual Aid, Call to Action Series podcast with Peter "Fish" Case and BCTV, Groundworks, Rhianna Kendrick at Southern Windham County Continuum of Care, the State Legislative Team of Emilie Kornheiser, Mollie Burke and Tristan Toleno, and Senators Becca Balint and Jeanette White, SEVCA (Southeastern Vermont Community Action), Essential Worker Child Care, BDCC (Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation), United Way, and Windham Regional Commission.

Quipp noted that the Town's website had links to many community resources, including Brattleboro Historical Society's online audio podcasts. Goodnow added that Vermont Legal Aid had a comprehensive list of resources pertaining to COVID-19. Wessel noted that Post 5 American Legion had a Buddy Check system and one suggestion was to check on people with needs but were unable to ask for assistance. Starr said that, as restrictions were being eased, she would support the businesses that encouraged social distancing with employees that wore masks. Wessel agreed that safety precautions included both wearing masks and maintaining a safe distance.

### ***PUBLIC PARTICIPATION***

Tom Costello, a veteran and member of Post 5 American Legion, spoke of a ceremony and banquet that took place on May 24, 2015 honoring soldiers of the Civil War, and also of a later event named "Honor" recognizing soldiers who died in Vietnam and all other men and women who died serving this country. He noted that the foundation for the events was the work of students from Brattleboro High School and he supported the students' work going forward. He said that he was in full support of the inquiry to identify all individuals who served and died and were not presently accounted for on the Monument [see Town Manager's Comments above]. He volunteered to participate in the search to identify all individuals who served, and said that he would be honored to dedicate the memorial when it was fully complete.

Stephanie Bonin, Executive Director of Downtown Brattleboro Alliance (DBA), spoke about a 12-week grant that DBA received to fund the One-To-One Project. The Project's purpose was to reach out to approximately 100 downtown retail businesses and assist the businesses in connecting with financial assistance available during the COVID-19 closures. She said that DBA spoke with 72 of the 100 businesses and learned that very few had been able to secure assistance funding available through the Federal government. She said that the community was not getting the relief that it needed. She spoke of many challenges to the businesses, and how to pivot as a business, in order to survive as they began to re-open. She said it would take time to regain community trust and asked for clear directions from community members. Starr suggested adding masks to the general signage "no shoes, no shirt, no service." Elwell responded that the Governor's Order did not contain a requirement that the public wear masks, but proprietors could make that a requirement before allowing a person to enter into their space.

Kate O'Connor, Executive Director of the Brattleboro Area Chamber of Commerce, noted that businesses in Brattleboro were still open and operating for on-line sales and curbside services. She asked people to shop local and support local businesses.

### ***COVID-19 UPDATE.***

Overall Update. Town Manager Elwell provided updated information regarding Town operations during the COVID-19 public health emergency. He announced that the Town was entering into Phase 1 of a slow reopening of Town facilities. He said that the buildings were still generally closed to the public, but that one employee would now be physically present in each office and if a piece of business required an office visit, an individual may make an appointment and be escorted to that office. He said that the visitor would be required to wear a mask and areas utilized would be sanitized after the visit. He strongly suggested that members of the public continue to conduct most business on-line, by telephone, e-mail, and mail. There was some discussion by the Board.

### ***NO ACTION TAKEN.***

Financial Update – Preliminary Estimate of FY20 Year-End Budget Results. Town Manager Elwell provided the Board with information on the potential impacts that the COVID-19 pandemic may have on the FY20 Budget, as set forth in his memo dated April 30. He discussed some assumptions that were made in connection with the estimated year-end budget results. He suggested that if residents were unable to pay their real estate taxes, they may consider asking the Board of Abatement for relief. Town Clerk Hilary Francis spoke about the abatement rules and process. She said that more information was posted on the Town's website. Elwell thanked State Representative Emilie Kornheiser and Senator

Jeanette White for their diligence in following through with a required provision in a legislative bill that would allow the Selectboard to adopt a budget and approve a tax rate for the new fiscal year if the annual Town Meeting had not yet taken place prior before the State of Emergency shutdown. There was substantial discussion by the Board.

**NO ACTION TAKEN.**

***WATER AND SEWER COMMISSIONERS***

**MOTION BY BRANDIE STARR TO CONVENE AS WATER AND SEWER COMMISSIONERS.  
MOTION CARRIED 5-0.**

Chair Wessel called for a five-minute recess at 8:09pm. He reconvened the meeting at 8:14pm.

Water Treatment Plant Replacement Project

- (i) Overall Update
- (ii) Approval to Apply for Funding from the State Revolving Loan Fund

Elwell said that the Town had been planning to upgrade or replace the Water Treatment Plant for many years. Public Works Director Steve Barrett spoke about the Pleasant Valley Water Treatment Plant and the current need to replace it. He said that the plant was built in 1989 with an expected useful life of 20 years, and the existing building was now substandard. He said that the total project cost estimate at this time (including a 25% contingency) was \$10.9 million. He said that funds were added to the Utilities Capital Budget in 2018 and 2019 for this purpose. He said that the Board was asked to approve an application for funding from the Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund (DWSRF) in the amount of \$480,000 for final design and engineering services of the plant, as set forth in the two memos dated April 27. Christina Haskins, PE and Vice President of Dufresne Group, spoke at length about the proposed replacement of the plant. She reviewed many aspects included in the preliminary engineering report prepared for the project. She said that the project included long-term sustainable solutions, energy efficiencies, a full upgrade of the SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition) system, with adequate space in the building to accommodate for future water quality regulations. She spoke about the benefits of the DWSRF loan and other possible grants and funding. She said that the State was supportive of this project and would provide a 25% subsidy this year. Elwell added that the project would require the vote of Representative Town Meeting before construction in 2021, which would require both cash and borrowing components. He added that it was a positive financing environment at this time. There were many questions and much discussion by the Board.

**MOTION BY DANIEL QUIPP TO APPROVE APPLICATION FOR A DRINKING WATER STATE REVOLVING FUND PLANNING LOAN OF \$480,000 TO COMPLETE THE FINAL DESIGN OF THE PLEASANT VALLEY WATER TREATMENT PLANT REPLACEMENT PROJECT. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.**

Signal Hill Pump Station Replacement Project

- (i) Purchase of Property
- (ii) Engineering Services Agreement

Public Works Director Barrett said that the Board was asked to approve two expenditures: (1) \$47,000 to purchase a property to build a water pump station to replace the existing (and obsolete) Signal Hill Pump Station, and (2) \$51,000 for Dufresne Group to design the replacement pump station. He said that the total project cost estimate at this time was \$300,000, as set forth in his memo dated April 28. He said that the pump station was built in the 1970s and the State had recently determined the current pump station to be substandard. There was a brief discussion by the Board.

**MOTION BY ELIZABETH McLOUGHLIN TO AUTHORIZE THE EXPENDITURE OF \$47,000 TO PURCHASE LOT 00110356.200 ON GUILFORD STREET TO BE THE SITE OF THE REPLACEMENT SIGNAL HILL PUMP STATION. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.**

**MOTION BY ELIZABETH McLOUGHLIN TO AUTHORIZE TOWN MANAGER ELWELL TO EXECUTE AN ENGINEERING SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH THE DUFRESNE GROUP FOR FINAL DESIGN OF THE SIGNAL HILL PUMP STATION FOR A FEE OF \$51,000. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.**

Overall Utilities Fund Capital Projects Update. Elwell said that the Board would discuss the FY21 Utilities Fund Capital Projects over the next few meetings and this presentation was an overview of the anticipated projects. Public Works Director Steve Barrett and Highway/Utilities Superintendent Dan Tyler reviewed the pending Utilities Fund capital projects, as set forth in their memo dated April 27. There was a brief discussion by the Board.

**NO ACTION TAKEN.**

**MOTION BY BRANDIE STARR TO ADJOURN AS WATER AND SEWER COMMISSIONERS. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.**

There was no further business.

**MOTION BY ELIZABETH McLOUGHLIN TO ADJOURN AT 9:22 PM. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.**

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Ian Goodnow, Clerk