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

Staff Present: Town Manager Peter Elwell, Assistant Town Manager Patrick Moreland, Town Assessor Jenepher Burnell, Planning Director Sue Fillion, Library Director Starr LaTronica, and Executive Secretary Jan Anderson.

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

Others present: Iishana Artra, Kurt Daims, Anita Hayden, Cassandra Holloway, ASL interpreters Elizabeth Fox and Virginia Clark, and others who did not sign the attendance sheet.

Chair Brandie Starr called the meeting to order at 6:19pm. She confirmed that the meeting was properly warned.

APPROVE MINUTES

Starr asked the Board to approve the minutes from the November 12 and November 19, 2019 meetings. There was no discussion.

MOTION BY ELIZABETH McLoughlin TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE NOVEMBER 12 AND NOVEMBER 19, 2019 MEETINGS. MOTION CARRIED 4-0.

CHAIR’S REMARKS

Chair Starr announced that a community event, entitled Awareness Raising, Bread Breaking and Noise Making Forum, was scheduled on Saturday, December 7, from 12:00pm to 3:00pm, and would take place at the Stone Church on Main Street. She said that the Community Equity Committee, which was comprised of people who suffer from housing insecurity, substance addiction, and poverty, was hosting the event. She said that the event was child friendly and would have food, games, live music, and a panel discussion. The panel consisted of current members with “lived-experiences” and the discussion would take place from 2:00pm to 3:00pm. The event had a suggested $10 donation and winter clothing donations were encouraged.

Starr also provided an update on the Health Order recently approved by the Selectboard on properties owned by Will Hunter and located at 6 Reynolds Drive and 48-50 Central Street. She said that the owner was given until December 4 to correct violations and further inspections would take place on Thursday December 5.

MANAGER’S COMMENTS

Town Manager Elwell provided an update on the snowstorm that lasted from Sunday afternoon through Tuesday. He said that the total snow accumulation varied from 18” to 22” depending on the location, and that some sidewalks contained mounds of snow about 5’ tall. He said that snow would be removed from the streets and parking lots for the next two nights. He warned that vehicles may not be parked overnight on any street or parking lot, and vehicles must be removed from streets by 11:00pm and from parking lots by 1:00am to avoid being towed. He invited the public to park overnight in the Transportation Center until 9:00am, and noted that overflow parking was allowed in the Preston Parking Lot on Flat Street.

Elwell announced the sad news of the death of a Public Works Department employee, Anthony Bombicino, who was a dedicated public servant and passed away from cancer at age 36. Elwell offered condolences to the Bombicino family and his co-workers. He asked for a moment of silence in honor of Mr. Bombicino.
SELECTBOARD COMMENTS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

Schoales announced that School Superintendent Lyle Holliday would retire at the end of the school year. He read a notice from the Windham Southeast Supervisory Union (WSESU) Board Chair, Kerry Amidon, announcing the upcoming superintendent search by the WSESU. He said that an exploratory committee had been formed to brainstorm, discuss, and debate options to recommend to the WSESU Board regarding the selection process. He said that the committee was holding its first meeting on Thursday, December 5, at 3:30pm in the multipurpose room at BUHS and that the public was invited to attend and provide input.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Kurt Daims suggested that the Board declare a "snow day" which may consist of snow activities, events, and contests.

Ilishana Artra, from EMF Safety for Vermont, spoke against the cell tower that was proposed to be installed in the steeple at the First Congregational Church in West Brattleboro. She said that the FCC had not updated its safety guidelines since 1986 and the Government Accountability Office had recommended that the FCC re-assess its policies. She spoke of concerns regarding unsafe exposure to radio frequency radiation (she called “electro smog”) and suggested that the Selectboard, as the Local Board of Health, comment on cell tower permit applications submitted to the Public Utilities Commission and notify the public of any applications. She said that the Local Board of Health had the obligation and authority under 18 V.S.A., Chapter 3, to protect the public from health hazards and risks. She asked the Board to investigate the Precautionary Principal.

Mary Stowe stated that safety responsibilities fall on the Selectboard and it should be aware of fake news published by the 5G industry.

Cassandra Holloway, Director of Building A Positive Community (BAPC) (formerly Brattleboro Area Prevention Coalition), announced that the organization recently changed its name and was expanding its focus for the youth in the community to live free from substance use. She spoke of using greater assets to build a positive community.

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution Supporting Municipal Authority in a Commercial Cannabis System. Elwell said that the Board was asked to approve a resolution that was part of the Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) advocacy for municipal authority, municipal revenue, and anticipated local impacts of a legalized commercial cannabis system, as set forth in his memo dated November 25. He said that the State Legislature was expected to approve such a system during the 2020 Legislative Session and impose certain regulations on communities, possibly with little to no funding for enforcement. He said that VLCT was requesting all Vermont communities to adopt the resolution to promote giving municipalities the adequate amount of time to prepare for the impacts of commercialization of cannabis, increase local control, and provide funding to municipalities. He said read the terms of the proposed resolution. Cassandra Holloway offered the services of BAPC. Rikki Risatti inquired whether the public would be able to vote against a tax on cannabis and spoke against such taxation. There was much discussion by the Board.

MOTION BY TIM WESSEL TO APPROVE A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING MUNICIPAL AUTHORITY IN A COMMERCIAL CANNABIS SYSTEM, AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED 4-0.

Acceptance of Proposal for Unconscious Bias and Cultural Humility Training. Elwell said that the Board was asked to authorize the Town Manager to engage Dottie Morris and Mary Gannon to provide training and facilitation services in accordance with their proposal dated October 30, 2019. He said that his memo, dated November 26, 2019, provided some background on Town efforts to promote racial and social equity over the past 3 years. He discussed the proposals that had been received and the reasons
this proposal was selected. He said that the proposal was included in the Board’s back-up materials. There was a brief discussion by the Board.

**MOTION BY ELIZABETH McLOUGHLIN TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO ENGAGE DOTTIE MORRIS AND MARY GANNON FOR A FEE OF $14,342.88 TO PROVIDE TRAINING AND FACILITATING SERVICES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THEIR PROPOSAL DATED OCTOBER 30, 2019. MOTION CARRIED 4-0.**

**FY21 Proposed Budget**

(i) Assessor’s Office  
(ii) Planning Services Department  
(iii) Brooks Memorial Library

Elwell noted that the proposed budget was posted on the Town’s website so viewers could follow along throughout the budget discussions.

Town Assessor Jenepher Burnell provided an overview of the operations of the Assessor’s Office. She spoke of increasing efficiencies within the office, training of staff, and updating pertinent software. She reviewed some line items of the department’s proposed budget (page 6 of the Operating Budget). There were some questions and a brief discussion by the Board.

Planning Director Sue Fillion provided an overview of the Planning Services Department, including consultation on large development projects, long-term and hazard mitigation planning, zoning permitting and enforcement, support of particular boards and commissions, and various community efforts. Elwell noted that funds appropriated at Representative Town Meeting on March 23 for energy and sustainability were included in this department’s budget (found on pages 7-8 of the Operating Budget) and would include the addition and support of a Sustainability Officer. There were several questions and much discussion by the Board, particularly about the sustainability position and funds.

Library Director Starr LaTronica noted that the mission of the Brooks Memorial Library was to connect people with resources and inspire, inform, and empower a diverse community. She spoke about the many resources and programs provided by the Library. She said that libraries were built on principals of sustainability, partnerships and collaboration. She spoke about plans to increase outreach in the community and the availability of staff. She spoke about funds available to the Library, including funding through taxes (budget found on pages 10-11 of the Operating Budget), endowments with overview by the Library Board of Trustees, and donations by the Friends of the Library. There were several questions and much discussion by the Board.

Elwell reviewed the upcoming schedule of budget discussions.

**NO ACTION TAKEN.**

There was no further business.

**MOTION BY DAVE SCHOALES TO ADJOURN AT 8:10PM. MOTION CARRIED 4-0.**

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Elizabeth McLoughlin, Clerk