

TOWN OF BENNINGTON

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Minutes of the Meeting – July 2, 2019

Selectmen James Cleary, David Hardwick, Sr., and Mark Mackesy were present as well as Town Administrator Kristie LaPlante. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

The Selectmen reviewed a letter from Highway Department employee Damon Beaudreau that documented a confrontation he had with the Road Agent on June 27, 2019 and his concerns relative to the Board of Selectmen's investigation into a minor fire at the Highway Garage on June 12, 2019.

The Selectmen discussed Highway Department staffing and an apparent miscommunication within the Highway Department on July 1st. Selectman Mark Mackesy reported to the Highway Garage as the employees started their shift and misunderstood an employee's task list as being assigned by the Road Agent (which it was not). This caused frustration with the Road Agent who felt that employees were choosing their own projects for completion and/or being assigned tasks by the Selectmen with disregard for other ongoing projects.

As-needed Highway Department employee Francis McMahon met with the Selectmen, at his request, to express his concern about Highway Department staffing. Fran shared with the Board his observation that the unrest within the Highway Department is significantly affecting productivity.

Road Agent Gary Russell and Highway Department employees Chris Davies and Damon Beaudreau met with the Selectmen at the Board's request. At 7:08 p.m. a motion was made by Selectman Mark Mackesy to enter in to Nonpublic Session under RSA 91-A:3-II(c) and seconded by Selectman James Cleary; all voted in favor of entering Nonpublic Session. Also present during the Nonpublic Session were Town Administrator Kristie LaPlante, Gary Russell, Chris Davies, and Damon Beaudreau. The group discussed staffing and personnel issues and the major negative impact that has had on construction projects and tax dollars. The Selectmen instructed the three employees that they are expected to report to work and are expected to work together; employees are also to follow directives from the Road Agent. The group discussed safety concerns as well as concerns with the quality of work on Onset Road. No decisions were made. Damon left the non-public session at approximately 8:00 p.m., Chris and Gary left the non-public session at approximately 8:10 p.m. Selectman Cleary made a motion to reconvene the Public Session; seconded by Selectman Mackesy; all voted to reconvene the Public Session at 8:20 p.m.

The Town Administrator shared a request from the Conservation Commission to plant a tree at the VFW. The Conservation Commission will be receiving a donated tree from the NH Urban and Community Forestry Program. And had originally planned to plant the tree at the property the Town will be gifted on Main Street. That, however, is not feasible until after the Historical Society has completed their gazebo and brick project. The Selectmen asked if the donated tree could be planted at the intersection of School Street/Main Street where a diseased tree was removed rather than plant the tree at the VFW. The Commission also asked for (and the Selectmen approved) permission to remove two maples trees and replace them with lilacs in the triangle lot near the Fire Department.

In other items on their Agenda, the Board:

- Reviewed and approved the Minutes of the Board's June 18, 2019 meeting.
- Reviewed and approved the Accounts Payable Registers for June 20, June 27, and July 3, 2019. They also reviewed and approved the Payroll Registers for June 27, 2019 and July 3, 2019.
- Heard a report that Primex has approved a supplemental claim for the Loader; repairs are now complete.
- Confirmed their April 3, 2019 intent to offer Short-Term Disability benefits to permanent, part-time employees who work a minimum of 20 hours a week. The Short-Term Disability benefit is 100% employee paid.
- Reviewed a request from the Recreation Committee to rent a storage unit to store all recreation materials. The Recreation Committee has maxed out their storage at Town Hall and at private residences. The Selectmen denied the request. The Town Administrator will explore cleaning out the former pump building at Cold Springs Pond for use for storing recreation materials and gear.
- Asked if the Conservation Commission could assume the task of trimming overgrown plants and shrubs at the monument in the center of Town.
- Received notice that Rymes will offer Employee Pricing to full-time employees only.
- Reappointed Steve Willette to the Conservation Commission.
- Reviewed and approved Building Permits for Map 7, Lot 10 and Map 23, Lot 1-8.
- Reviewed and approved an Intent to Cut for Map 24, Lot 24 and a Supplemental Intent to Cut for Operation 19-041-01-T.
- Signed a property ownership deed to convey Map 9, Lot 10 to the former owners.

There being no other business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristie LaPlante