SELECTBOARD - TOWN OF BRADFORD
REGULAR MEETING
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, August 10, 2023
6:00 p.m. at BA Building Rm 26

In Attendance:
**Board Members Present:** Meroa S. Benjamin, Dan A. Perry III, Michael Wright, Ryan Lockwood, Nikki Stevens

**Others Present:** Donna Wing (via zoom), Susanna Lewis (via zoom), Erin Fredieu (via zoom), Donna McCann, John McCann, Alex Nuti-de Biasi, Skip Barrett, Jean Carlan, Elizabeth Friend, Denise Woods, Alecha Eldred, Marguerite Cawley, Paul Hunt, Colin Kennedy, Nanc Jones, Tom McBride, Carolyn Coffin, Larry Coffin, Ed Wendell, Airon Shaw, Monique Priestley, Moriah Fahey, Jennifer Rivers, Molly Morin, Marcey Carver, Julie Baron, Charlie Brighten, Elaina Vitale

Meroa Benjamin called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**Additions & Changes to the Agenda:**
None.

**Public Comment:**
Moriah Fahey said that she was in support of Gail at the Bradford Public Library and is one of the residents that does not feel comfortable taking their kids to the library anymore with the number of homeless people hanging around. She stated she has been going out of Town because she does not feel safe here.

Larry Coffin agreed that many residents have been avoiding the library because they do not feel safe.

Larry Coffin also wanted it made known that he objects to the Selectboard limiting public discussion to the "public comment" section of the agenda only.

Marcey Carver made the Selectboard aware that Two Rivers Ottauquechee can put the Bradford Town Plan on their September 15th meeting if it is adopted before then.

Marcey Carver also wanted it known that she supports Larry Coffin’s comment about limiting the public to speak only during "public comment” only.

Donna McCann expressed her concern about the number of people speeding on Main Street and the lack of police coverage on Main Street. She told the Selectboard about a crash that happened on Saturday, July 29, 2023, and how they waited for over two hours for the State Police to show up. Three residents and neighbors of where the crash took place spoke about how terrified they’re to walk on the sidewalk and asked why we are paying the police department if can’t walk on our sidewalks.

Jean Carlan made the Selectboard aware that parks and recreation put a sign at Bugbee Landing for the public bathrooms at the golf course.

Paul Hunt questioned if the policy about public speaking only during “public comment’ only had been run through VLCT.

Meroa Benjamin replied that it has been run through VLCT and the Chair runs the meeting. The Selectboard has always tried to limit public comments to the begging of the meeting so that they’re able to conduct Town business but lately it has been getting out of hand. Not every Selectboard meeting is a town meeting.
Jennifer Rivers stated that as a taxpayer she elected the five Selectboard members to run the town business and expects them to do so and not the public.

Marcy Carver made the Selectboard aware that she now owns the building next to library, and she has had to board it up as she has had it broken into and items stolen. Marcy feels that another porta potty would be beneficial for the homeless and putting trash cans back, she would like to see the Selectboard take immediate steps to be a kinder community.

Meroa Benjamin commented that they know there is an issue at the library with the homeless and she is not sure if has to do with the convenience of it being in the middle of town, or the public Wi-fi, public water, or that it is a lighted area.

Larry Coffin hopes that the Selectboard does not get rid of the light at the library.

Nikki Stevens commented that she has read through the health officer handbook and found that there are safe places for needle services, and safe containers that can be supplied.

Skip Barrett commented that he appreciates the Selectboard limiting public comment during Selectboard meetings.

Monique Priestley made the Selectboard aware that the State funding is not over yet. Only the first set of people were let go that have the best chance of finding housing and jobs, it will be reevaluated in April by the State.

The Selectboard commented that the homeless situation is probably going to get worse before it gets better.

The Bradford Police Chief spoke to the number of issues his two-man department has been dealing with daily, to include homelessness, assaults, drug users. He feels that if the Town wants to see 24-hour coverage to include nights and weekends, the town would have to hire a 8-10 man police department. He also asked the public to come into the office any time with questions or to see the number of cases they have been working on.

Emily stated that she feels the homeless aren’t the only problem, the reason that they’re homeless is the problem.

Molly Morin stated that she supported what Emily said, that she has had close family members that have dealt with drug problems and that addiction is not a personal choice, the needles can be attended to reduce harm for whole community. She is disappointed in the way we are talking about human beings.

Erin Shaw stated that we should not be calling them “homeless” that they’re “unhoused” but the real issue is the Town does not have housing or transportation for these people. Where would they live?

Denay Woods stated she moved here about 100 days ago she supports the Town in speaking about the homeless situation and is glad we’re talking about it. She also supports sidewalk safety.

Skip Barrett made the Selectboard aware that they should look at the concept of a town manager again, so it does not take two-three weeks to get answers from the Selectboard.

**Set Town Tax Rate:**

Dan Perry made a motion to set the Town tax rates as follows:

- 0.5465 Town General Fund
- 0.0213 Sewer
- 0.0073 Local Agreement
0.4804 Highway Fund
0.0079 Street Bond (village residents only)

1.0555 Total Town Tax Rate
1.0634 Total Village Tax Rate
MOTION PASSED, UNANIMOUSLY.

Ryan Lockwood made a motion to approve the tax backer that was presented by the treasurer.
MOTION PASSED, UNANIMOUSLY.

Homeless Population:
Gail from the library made Nikki Stevens aware that people are avoiding the library.

Mike Wright made the rest of the board aware that he has been talking to homeless and making rounds around town. He has witnessed others leaving trash around town that are not homeless.

The Selectboard discussed the Bradford Resilience subcommittee starting back up to discuss the homeless situation and coming up with possible solutions.

Energy Committee- BA Lighting:
The energy committee would like to update all of the lightening in the Bradford Academy building to LED. Won’t be able to buy florescent bulbs in the near future.
More than 500 bulbs in the BA building.

The Selectboard would like to see the conservation committee approve this request in their meeting minutes, as the energy committee is a subcommittee of the conservation committee. The energy committee is basing this proposal off the facilities manager installing the bulbs for the auditorium and rest of the building. Currently the town does not have a facilities manager and this project was not budgeted for in 2023.
Their proposal included:
Gymnasium
Ballast Bypass- $262.08
Electrician- $1,360.00 (would like to hire Eastman Electric)

Auditorium
LED Plug and Play bulbs- $176.80
Ladder Extension- $200.00
TOTAL: $376.80

All other areas of BA
LED Plug and Play bulbs- $822.12

Grand total of $2,821.00

The Selectboard tabled this item until a future meeting and would like to see a quote from Eastman Electric.

Planning Commission- Consultant Recommendation:
Consulting contract, not exceed $23,000 ($100.00 an hour).
Would be assessing the needs and inform how to make our zoning more responsive to the type of housing that is needed in Bradford.

Michael Wright made a motion to contract with Heather Carrington from community development services as recommended by the planning commission as long as she gets her information to the treasurer as a vendor.
MOTION PASSED, UNANIMOUSLY.

Sign Permit- 802 AutoGlass:
Ryan Lockwood made a motion to approve the sign permit for David Hunt Jr. AutoGlass Repair and authorized Dan Perry to sign on behalf of the Selectboard.
MOTION PASSED, 4 AFFIRMATIVES (DAN PERRY, MICHAEL WRIGHT, RYAN LOCKWOOD, NIKKI STEVENS), AND 1 OPPOSED (MEROA BENJAMIN).

Recreation Director Job Description:
Nikki Stevens made a motion to approve the full-time parks and recreation job description and advertise for the position.
MOTION PASSED, UNANIMOUSLY.

Fire Department Building Application:
Dan Perry made a motion to approve the application for the Window Dressers to use the conference room at the fire department as long as the Fire Chief has approved the application as well.
MOTION PASSED, UNANIMOUSLY.

Alcoholic Beverage Ordinance- Approve:
Nikki Stevens made a motion to approve the alcoholic beverage ordinance as presented.
MOTION PASSED, UNANIMOUSLY.

Rented Space Outlets:
A new tenant would like more outlets put in her rented space at the BA and is willing to hire an electrician at her own expense if the Selectboard approves the request.

The Selectboard would like to hire an electrician themselves to look at two spaces in the BA building that need more electrical outlets.

Liquor Licenses:
Michael Wright made a motion to approve Black Flannel Distilling Company, to hold an event at Farmway on August 19, 2023.
MOTION PASSED, UNANIMOUSLY.

BA Use Applications:
Ryan Lockwood made a motion to approve parks and recreation to hold a SingSong event in the auditorium, pending grant approval and if the space is available on October 10, November 15, December 20, 2023.
MOTION PASSED, UNANIMOUSLY.

Dan Perry made a motion to approve Erin Fredieu to hold basketball skills and shooting practice on Monday, Wednesdays and Fridays starting on 8/14/23 through week of 11/13/23 from 5:30p.m. to 7:30p.m. pending she has insurance coverage that can be submitted to the Town.
MOTION PASSED, UNANIMOUSLY.

Minutes:
Nikki Stevens made a motion to approve the minutes of the public hearing alcoholic beverage ordinance on July 27, 2023.
MOTION PASSED, UNANIMOUSLY.

Michael Wright made a motion to approve the regular minutes of July 27, 2023.
MOTION PASSED, UNANIMOUSLY.
Orders:
Dan Perry made a motion to approve the orders dated August 11, 2023, in the amount of $77,503.81. 
MOTION PASSED, UNANIMOUSLY.

Other Business:
Mike Wright is going to reach out to get quotes about dock structure repair.

Dan Perry made a motion to approve Bob Wings training request and the overnight stay of a total of $400.00 for the VALA annual conference at Killington.
MOTION PASSED, UNANIMOUSLY.

The River Trails agreement (memorial field project) went to the school, Jean Carlan made the board aware that they’re waiting on their legal for advice and will get back to us.

The parks and recreation committee would like to print a flyer about donations for the skatepark. Jean Carlan went to the treasurer for the credit card to pay for the expense, the Selectboard let Jean know that this is not an emergency expense and therefore should not be put on the town credit card. The Selectboard would like Jean to get an invoice and do a purchase order to pay for the expense.

There were concerns about the skateboard donation flyer going out at this time due to tax time, back to school and Christmas and there not being a staff member to receive phone calls or questions about the donations.

Personnel - Executive Session:
Dan Perry made a motion that the Selectboard has determined that a personnel issue needs to be discussed in executive session because the premature public knowledge would place both the Town and the employee at substantial disadvantage.
MOTION PASSED, UNANIMOUSLY.

Dan Perry made a motion to go into executive session at 8:11 p.m. to discuss a personnel issue as allowed by 1 V.S.A. Section 313 (a)(1) and invite Danielle Kingsbury.
MOTION PASSED, UNANIMOUSLY.

The Selectboard came out of executive session at 8:30 p.m.

Mike Wright made a motion to accept Rodney Sherburne resignation from the facilities manager position and to appoint Paul Rivers as interim facilities manager.
MOTION PASSED, UNANIMOUSLY.

The selectboard adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

Meroa S. Benjamin, Chair

Daniel A. Perry III, Vice Chair

Ryan Lockwood

Michael Wright

Nikki Stevens