

SELECTBOARD- TOWN OF BRADFORD  
REGULAR MEETING  
Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, November 9, 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:** Peter Terry, Tom McBride, Nancy Jones, Marcey Carver, Monique Priestley, Ed Wendell, Donna Wing (via zoom), Susanna Lewis (via zoom), Elizabeth Friend, Alex Nuti-de Biasi, Paul Hunt, Andrea Sharon, Phil Page, Larry Coffin, Nikki's Otter Pilot (via zoom), Fireflies Notetaker Monique (via zoom), Sophia Gawel, Ryan Rebozo, Denee Woods, Elizabeth Towle, Bob Wing (via zoom)

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

**Additions & Changes to the Agenda:**

Add a purchase order under other business for fuel oil.

**Public Comment:**

Marcey Carver commented that she is disappointed in the way the Selectboard proceeded to revoke the planning commission rules of procedure. The Planning Commission has gone through and revised. Marcey stated that the Planning Commission gave her permission to approve all trainings and for Ted Unkles to approve her trainings.

Marcey Carver suggested that Selectboard should have a consistent policy with the credit card.

Marcey Carver would like clarification on the BA building being closed on Fridays.

Marcey Carver would like a response regarding her complaint about a serious episode that occurred between her and an employee of the Town. She is aware of other incidents that people have experienced with the same employee and would like the behavior addressed.

Nancy Jones read the following statement: "Nikki Stevens has informed me that I have been summoned to attend today's executive session with the Selectboard. I have not been given a reason for this; thus, in the interest of transparency and fairness, I must decline your invitation. It is my understanding that somewhere there is a list of my shortfalls that I am being called in to address. Until I have seen that list in writing, in advance, I am not willing to subject myself to any further bullying than what I have already experienced in these meetings. Once I have had an opportunity to review the list of my alleged transgressions and prepare a response to them, then I will be happy to respond in public, but not behind closed doors."

Paul Hunt commented that he has received third-hand information from social media that we have people in town approaching pole workers and forcing them at gun point to speak English. Does not want the town to be known for this.

Elizabeth Towle commented that she wants to give gratitude to people who serve our local government. Thank you to the conservation commission, energy committee, dog park, gardens, hiking trails etc. for providing a town with so much to offer. Thank you to the public servants for caring about the community and thank you to Nancy Jones for being a servant of Bradford for over 30 years, the care and conservation of our home. Thank you all and especially to Nancy Jones.

**Dog Bite Complaint- Andrea Sharon:**

Andrea Sharon shared with the Selectboard photos of dog bite that happened on Tarbox Road while she was walking her dog on the public roadway. Andrea is asking the owner of the dog that bit her dog to pay all the vet bills. Andrea is now concerned about walking the roadway herself and for the safety of others that live in proximity. The owner of the dog made no apologies and told her that the dog was just playing. The vet did ask for rabies vaccination, which was never provided, and the dog is not registered with the Town.

Andrea Stevens has filed a report with the Town Health Officer.

The Selectboard will review and follow up.

**Health Officer Resignation and Appointment:**

Ryan Lockwood made a motion to approve Nikki Stevens resignation from Health Officer.

MOTION PASSED, UNANIMOUSLY.

Mike Wright made a motion to appoint Sophia Gawel to the Town Health Officer position.

MOTION PASSED, UNANIMOUSLY.

Danielle Kingsbury called Nikki Stevens “she” while speaking in a sentence and Nikki Stevens informed her that Nikki would like to be addressed as “they/them”.

**Energy Committee Bylaws Proposal:**

Mike Wright made a motion to allow the energy committee to become a separate commission, known as the “Climate and Energy Commission” and have them revise the bylaws and bring back to the Selectboard for review.

MOTION PASSED, UNANIMOUSLY.

**Planning Commission- Village Center Designation:**

Marcey Carver presented the application for the village center designation to be renewed. The Planning Commission would like to see the map of the designated area be expanded.

**Trustees of Public Funds- Policy Proposal:**

Peter Terry, representing the Trustees of Public Funds proposed that the policy be changed for the Walter Lee Funds. The policy would encourage the Walter Lee committee to re-invest some of the income from the Walter Lee interest account back into the principal account in order to increase the base amount of the account, potentially boosting future earnings. The Walter Lee interest account is the only account that can be used for youth projects, and the principal is not to be touched. Traditionally all the income from the principal account is transferred to a interest account making it available to spend on approved projects. This new policy would require that some of the interest be moved to the principal account.

The Trustees are recommending that at the end of each year the Walter Lee Committee decides how much of the interest income should go back into principal account, thus boosting future earnings.

The Selectboard suggested that the Trustees of Public Funds speak with the whole Walter Lee Committee and treasurer before proceeding with the approval of this policy.

**Agency of Transportation- Right-of-way with Norwich Technology:**

Norwich Technology received a federal grant for the EV stations at Denny Park, which requires that the Agency of Transportation and Norwich Technologies receive a right-of-way certification from the Town so that they’re able to access the EV stations for repairs/maintenance.

The Agency of Transportation is asking that the Town hire an attorney to draft a right-of-way letter for these purposes. Some of the Selectboard members feel this should have been put in place before the project by Norwich Technologies started as the Town was told it would not cost any money to have the EV stations at Denny Park.

Ask Barrett Walter to get a copy of the EV project plan to submit to the Agency of Transportation for the project.

**Appropriation Requests 2024:**

Nikki Stevens made a motion to approve the following appropriation requests as a slate:

Green Mountain Economic Development- \$1,402

The Mentoring Project- \$1,500

Orange County Restorative Justice- \$700

Safeline- \$1,500

Little Rivers Healthcare- \$1,500

MOTION PASSED, UNANIMOUSLY.

Ryan Lockwood made a motion to approve Downstreet Housing appropriation request for \$1,500.

MOTION PASSED, 3 VOTES IN THE AFFIRMATIVE (RYAN LOCKED, NIKKI STEVENS, DAN PERRY), 2 VOTES OPPOSTED (MIKE WRIGHT & MEROA BENJAMIN)

**Speed on Main Street- BBA:**

The Selectboard asked Danielle Kingsbury to notify the BBA, in regard to the speed letter that was sent from Marvin Harrison, that the Town has notified the State of Vermont of the concerns of speed on Route 5 and we're being told that there is a traffic study in the works. The Bradford Police Department did an informal speed study that was sent to the State and the Public Safety Commission also held a public meeting regarding the issue on October 11, 2023.

**Town Donation/Refund Policy:**

Dan Perry made a motion to approve the Donation/Use Fee Payments and Refunds Policy as presented.

MOTION PASSED, UNANIMOUSLY.

**ARPA Funds:**

The Selectboard does not think it is fair to entertain second requests from the public regarding ARPA requests but would like to see the funds be used toward some of our first responders such as police department, fire department and fast squad. Also suggest to use the funds towards sidewalks in Town.

The Selectboard asked Danielle Kingsbury to reach out to these departments to see if they have any needs for ARPA funds that they would like to propose.

The Bradford Police Department has requested use of the funds toward the purchase of a police cruiser to replace the 2016 one. It was suggested from a resident that the PD wait until rebates are available for the purchase.

**North Pleasant Street:**

The Selectboard questioned what the next steps for the North Pleasant Street sidewalk project are. There was a suggestion to use part of the ARPA funds to hire an engineer to reevaluate the project.

Phil Page commented that the engineer will cost the Town anywhere between \$50,000 to \$100,000. The Town had borings done that are still good and at the garage. It is difficult to get a hold of an engineer currently.

**VLCT's Human Resources Consultation Program (Nikki S.):**

Nikki Stevens made the Selectboard aware that VLCT offers a program to assist with job descriptions, media compliance and other Human Resources abilities. Nikki Stevens would like to facilitate with VLCT to bring the program to Bradford. The Selectboard agreed this was a good idea.

**BA Use Applications:**

Mike Wright made a motion to approve the request for the Bradford Historical Society to use the auditorium on November 19, 2023, for a presentation and for the Bradford Alumni to use the auditorium, stage, conference rooms, corridor, and gym on June 8, 2024.

MOTION PASSED, 4 VOTES IN THE AFFIRMATIVE (NIKKI STEVENS, DAN PERRY, MIKE WRIGHT, RYAN LOCKWOOD), 1 VOTE OBSTAINED (MEROA BENJAMIN).

**Revised BA Use Application:**

Paul Rivers updated the BA Use application to include his name, grammatical changes, trash and recyclables changes, and a section regarding doors being left open.

The Selectboard would like to see the tarp addressed, fees, it being cleaned etc.

Add no food AND DRINKS (besides water)

There have been community concerns expressed to some of the Selectboard members about door being opened in the BA. The board would like the wording to be changed to say something like “doors are not to be opened any more than 15 minutes”, or “opened briefly”.

Send back for changes.

**Junk Ordinance Complaint:**

The Selectboard asked Danielle Kingsbury to send a letter to the property owners at 1254 Tarbox Road that they're in violation of the junk ordinance, make sure to thank them for the vehicle being moved out of the right-of-way.

**Minutes:**

Dan Perry made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 26, 2023, meeting with the correction that Nikki Stevens and Ryan Lockwood were not present during the meeting.

MOTION PASSED, 3 VOTES IN AFFIRMATIVE (MIKE WRIGHT, DAN PERRY, MEROA BENJAMIN), 2 VOTES OPPOSED (RYAN LOCKWOOD, NIKKI STEVENS).

**Orders:**

Dan Perry made a motion to approve the appropriations orders in the amount of \$61,865.00 dated November 10, 2023.

MOTION PASSED, UNANIMOUSLY.

Dan Perry made a motion to approve the regular orders in the amount of \$54,356.52 dated November 10, 2023.

MOTION PASSED, UNANIMOUSLY.

**Other Business:**

Monique Priestley pointed out that the Selectboard needs to ratify all of its motions made under “other business” at future meetings.

Monique Priestley asked why Nikki Stevens name was next to the agenda item titled “VLCT’s Human Resources Consultation Program” and thought it was discriminatory.

The Selectboard received three quotes for oil:

Jock Oil- \$3.40 per gallon

Dead River- \$3.758 per gallon

Thomson Fuels- \$3.54 per gallon

6,000 gallons are needed for the Bradford Academy building.

Mike Wright made a motion to use Jock Oil to purchase 6000 gallons of fuel oil for the BA building at \$3.40 per gallon.  
MOTION PASSED, UNANIMOUSLY.

**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 7:58 p.m. to discuss a personnel issue as allowed by 1 V.S.A. Section 313 (a)(1) and invite Danielle Kingsbury and Phil Page.  
MOTION PASSED, UNANIMOUSLY.

The Selectboard came out of executive session 8:33 at p.m.

Dan Perry made a motion to hire Hunter Page and Guy Welch as highway workers for the Town.  
MOTION PASSED, UNANIMOUSLY.

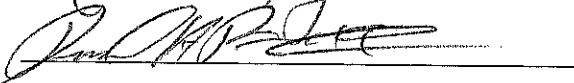
Mike Wright made a motion to accept Vince Pacilio resignation as Lister and thank him for his service.  
MOTION PASSED, UNANIMOUSLY.

Mike Wright made a motion to send the dog owner, Keith Desrochers, a letter regarding the dog bite incident.  
MOTION PASSED, UNANIMOUSLY.

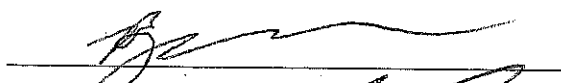
The selectboard adjourned at 8:37 p.m.



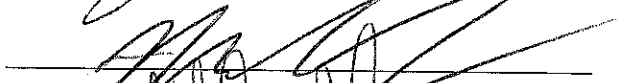
Meroa S. Benjamin, Chair



Daniel A. Perry III, Vice Chair



Ryan Lockwood



Michael Wright



Nikki Stevens