

**Brandon Select Board Meeting
January 23, 2017**

NOTE: These are unapproved minutes, subject to amendment and/or approval at the subsequent board meeting.

In Attendance: Doug Bailey, Seth Hopkins, Devon Fuller, Brian Coolidge, Tracy Wyman

Others In Attendance: Dave Atherton, Arlen Bloodworth, Lee Kahrs, Bill Moore, Steve Bissette, Chris Brickell, Jeff Stewart, Sue Gage

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order by Doug Bailey – Chair @ 7:05PM.

a) Agenda Adoption – Motion by Devon Fuller/Tracy Wyman to adopt the agenda as amended. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Addition of Item 9b – MasterCard payment of \$175.17

2. Approval of Minutes

a) Select Board Minutes – January 9, 2017

Motion by Tracy Wyman/Devon Fuller to approve the January 9, 2017 Select Board meeting minutes as amended. **The motion passed unanimously.**

On Page 5 – Item 9 – correction to the vote acceptance to read quitclaim deed

3. Town Manager’s Report

Dave Atherton reported the RFQs for the Segment 6 construction, inspection and management have been posted on Works in Progress, the Town website and the State of Vermont Project website. Bids will be reviewed and awarded on February 8th. The appeal period for condemnation ended on January 15th for the subject parcel. The Town is still waiting for both deeds to be returned on the 4 Conant Square property. Utility pole replacement has started on Franklin Street. The overflow culvert concrete work has started. The pad has been poured for the outlet and the rebar is being installed for the sidewalls. Five pieces of the culvert box will be set this week. The excavation continues and a schedule from Markowski was provided to the Board. The Stream Alteration permit has been submitted for the Churchill Road Bridge. A meeting was held with Wayne Elliott of A & E on January 20th regarding the Champlain Street sewer project to go over the final plans for approval and preparation for posting the invitation to bid. The project is planned to go out to bid by the end of February. The current tax delinquencies are \$175,862.55 and sewer delinquencies are \$65,753.68. There have been 47 payment agreements made and 18 properties remain for tax sale. The sale is scheduled for

February 24, 2017. Devon Fuller, Bill Moore and Mr. Atherton attended a meeting today in Montpelier about the downtown designation. Bill Moore reported this was the first meeting of the year of the Designated Downtown Board for approving downtown designations. Mr. Moore thanked the Planning Commission, Select Board and all who provided support for this process; noting the downtown designation was renewed for another five years for Brandon. Mr. Moore also wished to thank outgoing President of the Downtown Group, Jeff Stewart, for all his work that included the new roof on the Methodist Church. Devon Fuller also wished to thank Bill Moore and David Atherton for submitting the application on time, as there were several towns that were requesting 30 – 90 day delays due to late applications. In the Rec Department, two seats remain for the February 3rd Celtics bus trip and several tickets remain for the March 25th Boston Flower Show/Aquarium trip. There will be a youth wrestling information meeting at OV on January 31st at 6PM. There will be a showing of the movie, Ground Hog Day, on February 2nd @ 6:30PM that will include waffles and fruit served. This is a free offering and thanks goes out to Bill Mills, Colleen Wright and the Brandon Area Toy Project. The Neshobe PTO/Brandon Rec Talent Showcase will be held February 10th @ 6:30PM at the Town Hall that will include 16 acts. A free will admission will benefit the THINK Neshobe Art Project. Due to the recent change in weather, the “Winter Carnival” will be held at Neshobe School on February 11th with thanks to the National Bank of Middlebury for sponsoring. Stephanie Kellogg, basketball mom and Cattails Restaurant owner, has started a fundraising raffle to purchase new uniforms for the 3rd through 6th grade basketball programs. The Brandon Rec and Pittsford Rec are collaborating to offer Middlebury Snow Bowl ski lessons on Sundays in March.

4. Comments for Items not on the Agenda

Brian Coolidge asked who is paying for the signs that light up for the construction. Mr. Atherton reported they are in the Markowski contract; however, there have been issues with them working. Mr. Coolidge suggested they should either be fixed or removed.

Doug Bailey stated the new owner of Greg’s Tire noted he was very impressed with the interest Mr. Moore took in the start-up of his business. Mr. Bailey wished to thank Mr. Moore for a job well done.

Doug Bailey reported he has received a petition regarding the property at 28 Walnut Street that had a fire in mid-April and is vacant and the owners are in bankruptcy. Mr. Bailey requested the Town Manager determine if there is a way, under the vein of a safety hazard to address this issue. Dave Atherton stated this has been previously brought to the Town’s attention and he has spoken with the bankruptcy attorney and was advised that there was discussion of offering the property in lieu of taxes. Mr. Atherton stated there has also been discussion with the state regarding the debris. The Town’s hands are tied at this point, but there are people interested in purchasing it. Mr. Bailey requested Mr. Atherton ask the town’s attorney how this can be resolved. Mr. Bailey stated if the owners give the Town a deed in lieu of taxes, it would be the best and fastest way to resolve the issue, as this is a safety hazard.

Steve Bissette asked if the hole on Carver Street is going to be fixed. Doug Bailey talked with Daryl Burlett today and he advised this will be repaired in the spring.

5. Appointments

a) DRB – for Remainder of Term Ending June 30, 2017

Dave Atherton reported a member of the DRB has resigned. An email has been received from Amber Lee expressing interest in being on the Board.

Motion by Devon Fuller/Brian Coolidge to appoint Amber Lee to the DRB for the remainder of the term that will end June 30, 2017. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Doug Bailey thanked Eric LaRock for his participation on the DRB.

6. Approval of Town Meeting Warning

Doug Bailey stated the Board has a new warning with a change under each of the appropriations adding the wording; voting for the appropriation to be raised by property taxes. Seth Hopkins questioned if the appropriation for the Boys and Girls Club had been reallocated since the organization stopped operating in Brandon. Dave Atherton stated this was discussed with the town clerk and he has a call into the town's attorney to determine how this situation should be handled.

Motion by Seth Hopkins/Tracy Wyman to sign the Town Meeting warning as presented for the evening meeting of March 6th. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Seth Hopkins reported the Town meeting of March 6th will be held in the upstairs of the town hall and the voting on March 7th will take place in the town hall basement. The annual school meeting will be held on a different night.

7. Option Tax Discussion

Seth Hopkins stated the Board has for consideration a discussion draft of a suggested policy for a responsible spending of the option tax. The Town will be receiving the first installment from the State for October, November and December. In speaking with Bernie Carr, the merchants appear to be reporting it was a smooth implementation and collection has been without disruption to their businesses. The discussion draft quotes the language of the Charter and there are five points: 1) ask the Town Treasurer to record all funding, 2) spending in whole or in part should not be by the employees, but by the Select Board, 3) to define capital projects, 4) the Select Board will develop a prioritization plan, however, a project does not need to be on the list and 5) the Treasurer will develop an activity report and provide it for the Town Meeting report. Devon Fuller suggested under Item 3, grant matching, that it indicate local contribution to grant matches. Sue Gage clarified that it would be a separate restricted fund rather than a separate account and stated the Select Board would have to create a Local Options Fund. Doug Bailey requested the Board's input on Item 3 as to whether the Board felt there should be specifics on

capital items, such as the purchase of police cruisers. It was noted that once all other capital improvements are completed, funding could be used for such things as police cruisers. Dave Atherton stated line 2 could end the sentence after the wording Select Board. Mr. Fuller stated it was also discussed about using the funding for debt that was incurred for capital improvement projects. Dave Atherton stated there have been people that thought the option tax would be funding to put into the operating budget. He stated there had been discussion of reducing the Police Department bond as it is a building that would fit the capital projects and if paid down, it would eliminate debt for the operating budget. Mr. Bailey stated some people had interpreted the funding for capital projects to be for future capital projects and felt that the bond payments are past projects. Mr. Bailey stated there are many infrastructures that need fixing. Mr. Atherton stated there has been history of debt in town and this funding could reduce it. Mr. Bailey stated there is nothing in the budget designated for the additional funding and the Town does have the matches for the current projects. Mr. Fuller could see including the ability to pay bonds for infrastructure and he agreed with the Town Manager that it is less money the taxpayers will have to pay for upkeep of the Town. Mr. Atherton would like to see the Town get out of some of the financial situations that it has been in. Mr. Fuller felt it was worthwhile including bond payments in the document and it will be the Select Board who will make the decision on how to spend it. Mr. Atherton stated this provides the Town of Brandon a great resource to get caught up. It was recommended to include in Item 3 – and infrastructure bond payments. Mr. Bailey suggested adjusting the document and to include this item on the agenda for the next Select Board meeting for review and approval.

8. Consider Donation to American Red Cross of New Hampshire and Vermont

Dave Atherton stated this donation request came to the Town Clerk. Seth Hopkins recognizes the Red Cross does valuable work but noted it is not appropriate to donate taxpayers' money. The Town Clerk has informed the organization of the appropriation policy.

Motion by Seth Hopkins/Tracy Wyman to choose to take no action on the request from the American Red Cross of New Hampshire and Vermont. **The motion passed unanimously.**

9. Fiscal

Sue Gage provided the Board financial reports and noted that everything is good and is in line. There are no special notes, but she encouraged the Board to become familiar with the report. Doug Bailey asked about the town appropriation for \$100,200.00 as the report indicates it was spent; however, Mr. Burlett has indicated there is still money being held. Ms. Gage advised the funds were expended into a different account and she then accounts for them in the subsequent fund. Seth Hopkins thanked the Town Clerk for the time spent in explaining the reports. Mr. Hopkins questioned if the revolving loan fund that was to have a balloon payment this month was paid. Bill Moore will follow up on this item and will advise the Board. Sue Gage suggested she could meet with the board members to review the report in more detail; noting she had provided the Board a sweep of the funds in providing the most active funds and summaries of cash flow. Mr. Hopkins stated it is nice that it is in the same format for comparison over time. Mr. Bailey asked if the Town Clerk is comfortable with the cash reserves. Sue Gage stated it does fluctuate and she tracks all fund balances and reviews the general fund balance at all times.

She stated cash flow has been very good. Seth Hopkins stated the Town Clerk had discussed a Fund Balance policy and questioned if the Board would consider developing a policy so the taxpayers know there is a general philosophy of where it should be. Mr. Bailey volunteered to work with Ms. Gage on the development of a policy.

a) Warrant – January 23, 2017 - \$234,431.70

Motion by Devon Fuller/Brian Coolidge to approve the FY2016/17 warrant of January 23, 2017 in the amount of \$234,431.70. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Seth Hopkins questioned the warrant for Magic Minus Zero and Dave Atherton advised that it is an additive for the road salt so that it works down to -18 degrees and turns the road salt to a brown color. Mr. Hopkins also questioned the warrant for VLETS and Chris Brickell stated it is the half of the overall bill for the Vermont Communication System for the Police Department that is paid to the Vermont Department of Public Safety.

b) Warrant – January 23, 2017 - \$175.17

Motion by Seth Hopkins/Tracy Wyman to approve the MasterCard warrant of January 23, 2017 in the amount of \$175.17. **The motion passed unanimously.**

13. Adjournment

Motion by Devon Fuller/Tracy Wyman to adjourn the Select Board meeting at 7:54PM. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant
Recording Secretary