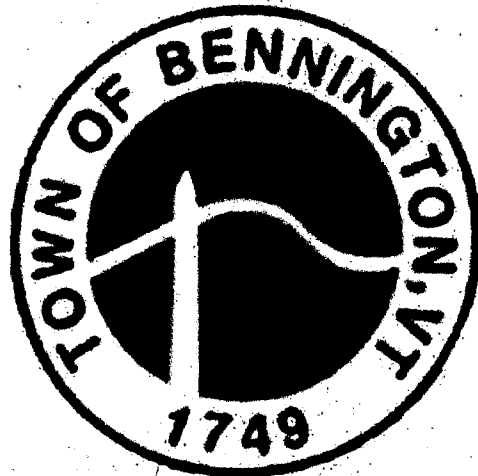


Town
of
Bennington, Vermont
ANNUAL REPORT
2003



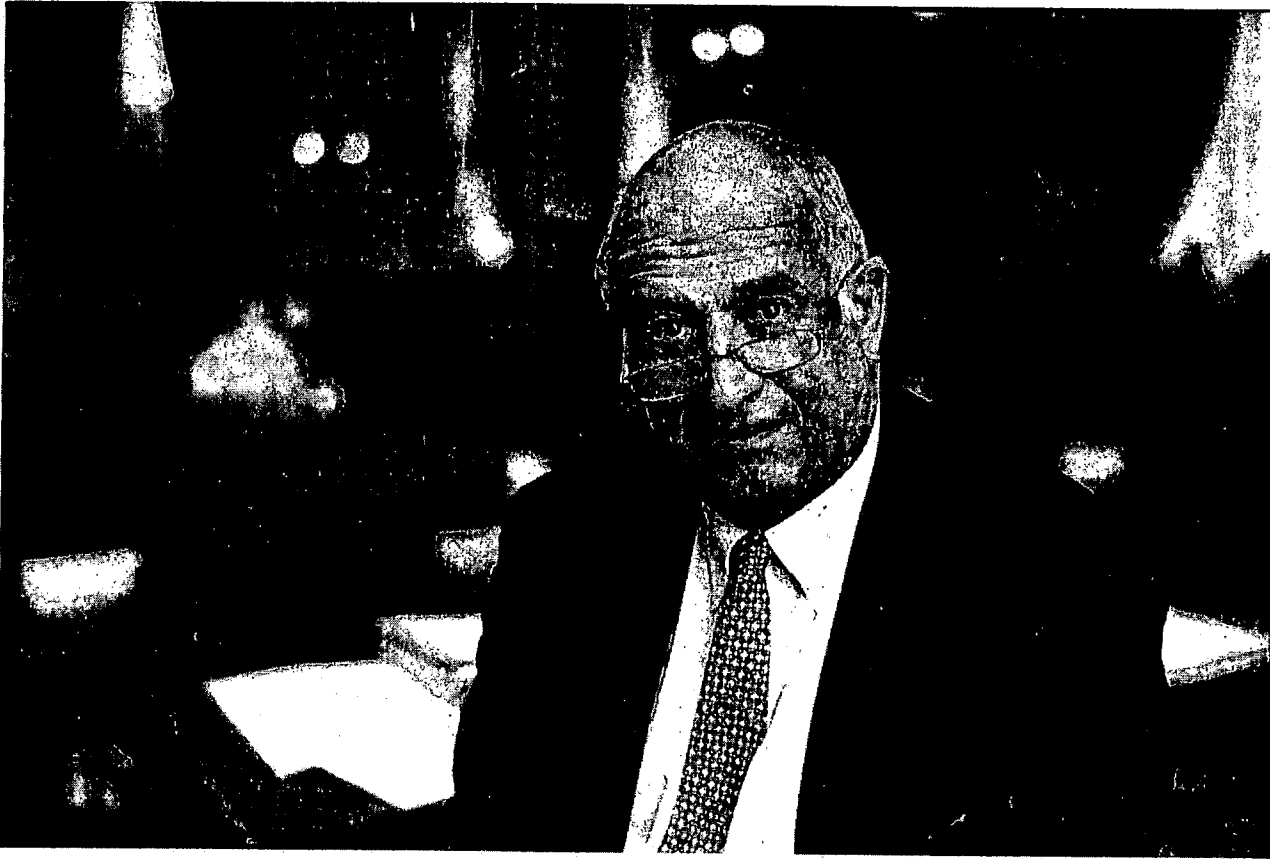
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*The Annual Report for the Town of Bennington, Vermont, is published annually.
Report for the Bennington School District is published annually.
It also does not include the Villages of Old Bennington and Bennington.
Each of these governing bodies publishes an Annual Report.*

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DEDICATION



Richard C. "Dick" Pembroke, Sr.

This year's Town Report is being dedicated to Richard C. "Dick" Pembroke, Sr. Dedicating this report to Dick is our way of saying thank you for the many years of dedicated service he has given his country, state and community. Born and raised in Montpelier, Vermont, Dick served four years in the Navy during the Korean Conflict after his graduation from high school. Dick and his wife Mary Ann along with their four children, Richard Jr., Ronald, Russell and Sharon, moved to Bennington in 1962. Dick served eleven years on the Zoning Board of Adjustment, many of those years as Chair. He also represented Bennington for sixteen years in the Vermont State Legislature and Chaired the House Transportation Committee for fourteen years. There he used his influence and legislative abilities to secure many important transportation projects for Bennington County. His service to his community and state did not stop after his retirement from the Legislature in January of 2003. He presently serves on the Southwestern Vermont Medical Center Board and was appointed by Governor James H. Douglas to the State Environmental Board.

DEPARTMENT DIRECTORY

FIRE DEPARTMENTS (VOLUNTEER)

Emergency - Bennington: Philip Frasier, Chief..... 9-1-1
Emergency - Rural Fire: Kevin Goodhue, Chief..... 9-1-1

POLICE DEPARTMENT, 118 South Street, P.O. Box 1563

Police Chief: Richard Gauthier

Animal Control..... 442-1048
Emergency..... 9-1-1
Information..... 442-1030

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT, P.O. Box 469

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 7:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Highway Superintendent, Patrick Kinney..... 442-1037
Water Resources Superintendent, Terrance A. Morse..... 442-1037

RECREATION CENTER, 655 Gage Street, P.O. Box 469

Recreation Director: Tracy Knights

Hours of Operation: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday

6:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Tuesday and Thursday

8:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Saturday

9:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Sunday

1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Center..... 442-1053

Stark Street Playground..... 442-6286

RESCUE SQUAD..... 9-1-1

SENIOR CITIZEN'S CENTER, P.O. Box 469, 124 Pleasant Street..... 442-1052

Senior Center Director: Susan Hoag

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

TOWN OFFICE, 205 South Street, P.O. Box 469

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Town Office Building Switchboard..... 442-1037

Town Manager, Stuart Hurd

Economic & Community Development Director, William Colvin

Human Resources & Contracts Administrator, Michele Johnson

Town Accountant, David Essaff

Permitting, Planning & Code Enforcement..... 442-1040

Building Inspector, Kevin Goodhue

Facilities Manager, Larry McLeod

Permitting, Planning & Code Enforcement Director, Dan Monks

Treasurer, William Burfeind..... 442-1041

Assessors Office, Lindalee Hayden..... 442-1042

Town Clerk, Timothy Corcoran..... 442-1043

Director of Collections, Joan Pinsonneault..... 442-1046

TRANSFER STATION SCALE HOUSE, Houghton Lane..... 447-8737

Hours of Operation: Monday, Wednesday & Friday 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Tuesday, Thursday & Saturday 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

SELECT BOARD

It is hard to believe that another year has come and gone. During the past year we have seen the lighting of the Monument, the arrival of Home Depot and a new Micro Technology Center

Again we are proposing for your approval a budget at a less than 3% increase. We made cuts in the budget including two proposed new positions to save additional taxpayer dollars. Even though cuts were made this budget contains additional highway dollars for work on our roads and sidewalks. We are presenting a bond for the Water Treatment Plant upgrade, much of which is required to meet Federal standards. This project is necessary so that we may continue to deliver safe drinking water to our customers.

We have seen progress in the area of economic development with the marketing and sale of some key real estate bringing such firms as Home Depot, Wendy's, Hampton Inn, and several other retail businesses to the Community. The Board and the Planning Commission will be wrestling with the "Big Box" issue and the adoption of a new Zoning Bylaw in the coming year.

All in all I think we are making progress here in Bennington, slower than some might like, but very positive progress none-the-less. The Board will continue to work towards the goal of creating and maintaining a community which is vibrant, economically stable and creative.

Respectfully submitted,
Sharyn L. Brush, Chair

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

The following list of the Town of Bennington Boards and Commissions includes a brief description of the duties of each office and those positions that will be available in March and May, 2004.

SELECT BOARD MEMBERS - An elected position with a salary currently set at \$1,200 per year with terms of three years. Meetings are held on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month plus the Annual Town meeting in March of each year, and any special meetings which may be required. Select Board Members are empowered by statute and charter to determine policy, finances, ordinances and general direction of Town business, appoint the Town Manager and members of Boards and Commissions.

(elected 3 year term)

Sharyn L. Brush	3/04
Ronal P. Hall	3/04
Joseph L. Krawczyk, Jr.	3/04
Lodie Colvin	3/05
James A. Gulley, Sr.	3/05
Scott Creedy	3/06
Michael L. Lochner	3/06

CONSTABLES - An appointed position paid hourly for a term of one year, which requires an oath and bonding by the Select Board. The constables may act as law enforcement officers or serve civil process.

(appointed to 1 year term)

1ST Raelene Bardwell	3/04
2ND Peter Lanfair	3/04

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD - The Development Review Board hears and decides upon permit applications regarding development in the Town of Bennington including, Variance Requests, Conditional Use Requests, Site Plans, Design Plans, Planned Unit Developments, Planned Residential Developments, Subdivisions, and Appeals of the Zoning Administrator's decisions. Board members will be expected to attend at least one training session annually to develop and maintain the skills and knowledge necessary to perform their powers and duties on the Board.

(appointed to 3 year term)

William Barney	5/04
Robert C. Burgess	5/04
James C. Jerome, Jr.	5/04
Ron Alderman	5/05
Janet G. Thompson	5/05
Michael C. vonOuhl	5/05
Michael E. Brady	5/06
Charles W. Copp	5/06
Barry Horst	5/06

Alternates

Randy Maxon	5/04
Albert T. Ray	5/05
Andrew M. Anderson II	5/06

DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT COMMISSION - An appointed position with a term of five years. The Downtown Improvement Commission is charged with administering the taxes generated by the Downtown Taxing District, and acts as a liaison between those groups advocating for Downtown and the Select Board.

The Taxing District and the Commission were established by Charter Amendments and reauthorized in March of 1995 for another three years.

(appointed to 5 year term)

David J. Newell	3/04
Ryan Hassett	3/05
POSITION OPEN	3/06
Mark Vaughan	3/07
Richard Havlak	3/08

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION - An appointed position with a term of three years and requires expertise or qualifications in the fields of architecture, historic preservations, etc. Meetings are held twice per month.

The Historic Preservation Commission is empowered by ordinance to act in the preservation and identification of Bennington's historic sites and structures; oversee the survey and review of historic sites eligible for the National Register, educate and advise other boards and commissions as well as the general public with regard to historic preservation matters.

(appointed to 3 year term)

David B. Aldrich	3/04
Hugh Baker	3/04
Anne G. Bugbee	3/04
Tordis Isselhardt	3/05
Victor R. Rolando	3/05
Sharon L. Yorke	3/05
Margaret B. Campbell	3/06
John J. Dostal	3/06

HOUSING AUTHORITY - An autonomous body appointed for terms of five years by the Select Board which acts as the Board of Directors for Housing Authority properties (Willowbrook, Brookside Apartments, Beech Court, and Walloomsac Apartments) and oversees the staff and sets policies for operation.

(appointed to 5 year term)

Judith Adams	3/04
Scott A. McLaughlin	3/05
Nancy Elaine Shay	3/06
Kim M. Livingston	3/07
POSITION OPEN	3/08

JUSTICES OF THE PEACE**(elected 2 year term)**

Paul Bohne, Jr.	11/04
Dorothy Carroll	11/04
Joseph Carroll, Sr.	11/04
Linda Corcoran	11/04
Leonard Farrington	11/04
Barbara Bluto	11/04
Ronald Knapp	11/04
Albert Krawczyk	11/04
Mary Madkour	11/04
Anne Mook	11/04
Mary Morrissey	11/04
John Page	11/04
D. Justine Scanlon	11/04
Mary Ann Pembroke	11/04
John Stone	11/04

BOARD OF LISTERS - An appointed position with a term of two years. Meetings are held once or twice per month or as needed. The Listers inspect properties, approve assessments developed by the Assessor's Office and hear and act upon appeals by property owners.

(appointed to 2 year term)

Shirley Archibald	3/04
Sam Carrara	3/04
Lawrence Powers	3/04
Mary Bentley	3/05
Henry J. Edwards	3/05
Leonard G. Morse	Life-Time Ex-Officio

TOWN MODERATOR**(elected to 3 year term)**

James H. Colvin	3/04
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PLANNING COMMISSION - An appointed position with a term of four years. Meetings will be established when the Commission meets. This is a five member board. The Planning Commission drafts, revises, updates and upholds the provisions of the Town Plan; makes recommendations to the Select Board regarding amendments to the Zoning Bylaw, sign ordinance, and subdivision regulations; actively participates in the preservation of historic sites and agricultural lands; and is charged with the overall planning of Bennington.

(appointed to a 4 year term)

Barry Horst	5/04
Charles W. Copp	5/05
Michael P. McDonough	5/05
Robert C. Burgess	5/06
Sharon L. Yorke	5/07

REGIONAL COMMISSION - An appointed position with a term of two years.

The Regional Commission, part of a county-wide planning commission charged with development of the overall regional planning policies, is empowered to develop budgets, employ staff and assist in development of a regional plan.

(appointed to 2 year term)

Jeannie Jenkins 3/04

Robert C. Burgess 3/05

TOWN SERVICE OFFICER - An appointed position with a term of one year. The Town Service Officer acts as an agent for the Town and operates a voucher system to provide housing and meals to transients in emergency situations.

(appointed to 1 year term)

Kendy Skidmore 3/04

MANAGER'S MESSAGE

This past year was one of economic improvement and job creation. In the end, the new growth was tempered by the announcement that UST will be closing in 2004. Bennington has seen expansion in many of our industrial businesses, NSK, Abacus, Vermont Composites and the new Micro Tech Center at year end. Carbone Honda/Toyota, the Hampton Inn, 210 South Street, Home Depot, and now talk of a major, "big box" retail development highlight the exciting office and retail growth Bennington is experiencing. The community must understand the impacts these developments have and begin to focus its efforts on minimizing those negative impact potentials insuring that such growth is welcome and positive. To that end in January 2004, the Bennington County Regional Commission will be sponsoring the first public forum on "big box" developments and where new commercial growth should be directed. The Bennington Planning Commission will hold additional forums. The new Zoning Bylaw, the regulation which provides the guidelines for developments, should be adopted by the Select Board in January as well.

The Town's FY '03 Audit, reviewed in December by the Select Board, shows Bennington to be in good financial shape. The auditors, under questioning from the Board, gave the Town staff and management an "A" for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2003. The entire Audit is contained in this Annual Report. New auditing guidelines seek to make the audit a little easier to understand and, in the future, will require year to year comparisons of the financial condition of the Town.

During 2003, the Town completed reconstruction of its dewatering and composting facilities destroyed by fire in 2002. The facility went back on line in November, and is once again producing marketable compost. We also completed the final design for an upgraded water treatment facility. This project, estimated to cost nearly \$7.0 million, will be placed before the voters in March 2004 for bonding approval. The estimated impact on water user rates is a 45.7 % increase over a three year period, or by 2006. The cost to borrow money remains low. The Select Board has trimmed the project to meet the needs of the system while maintaining compliance with new State and Federal regulations, the primary reason for the upgrade. It is also the first major upgrade to the water treatment plant in 25 years. We continue to work with Vermont Pure to complete necessary improvements at the Morgan Spring pump facility which will allow us to market the Springs' water for the first time. State requirements and design and construction delays have prevented us from moving as quickly as we had hoped.

Mother Nature had her way this past year. The Winter of 2002 - 2003 was one of the snowiest winters on record. A tornado struck the region in July. August brought several severe rainfall events creating havoc for our road maintenance and repair. And to top it off, to date, this winter has had more snowfall than last year at this time. The saving grace has been the warm weather in between storm events. Let's hope that the remainder of the winter remains calm and predictable.

I believe I speak for the Town's employees in wishing you all the best for the coming year. We are here to serve you in the most professional and cost-efficient manner we can. Please enjoy the Annual Report. It contains a wealth of information about your community. If you have any questions at all, please contact me at the Town Manager's Office, PO Box 469, Bennington, Vermont, 05201, or give me a call at 802-442-1037.

Respectfully submitted,
Stuart A. Hurd, Town Manager

BENNINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

Activity

This year, 2003, was a busy one for the Bennington Police Department responding to almost 8,300 incidents or calls for service. A complete breakdown of our activity would be impossible in the space allotted here, but some of the offenses for which an arrest was made or a citation issued are noted below:

Assault (all forms)	104
Disorderly Conduct	42
Violation of Abuse Prevention Order	37
Larceny/Theft/Checks	112
Sex Offenses	40
Vandalism	66
Violation of Conditions of Release	186
Drug Offenses	60
DUI/DUI Refusal	89
DLS	47
Minors Possessing Alcohol	88
Furnishing Alcohol to Minors	11
Other Motor Vehicle Operation Offenses	45

In addition, the Department investigated 600 motor vehicle accidents that resulted in property damage or personal injury.

Personnel/Training

We have made some personnel changes this year. John Behan, James Gulley, Erick Erickson, Dave Faden, Tom Bull, and Tony Sylvestro joined us as full time officers, while Amy Vreeland and Dave Long joined us as part time officers. Officers Thalia Hudson and Larry Cole were assigned to the Bureau of Criminal Investigation. Detective Rowland was promoted to corporal and assigned to the patrol division.

And last but not least, Detective Gary Briggs retired after more than 30 years with this agency.

Officers received enhanced training in specialty areas such as drug investigations, emergency vehicle operation, child abuse investigations, police patrol supervision, and use of special weapons. Officers from the department also served as instructors and training assistants at the Vermont Police Academy. The department's Special Response Team was formed in 2003 and recently began training. The School Resource Officer Program continues, and now involves the middle school as well as the high school.

As always, if anyone has any questions or comments, please feel free to call me at 442-1030.

Respectfully submitted,
Richard B. Gauthier, Chief of Police

BENNINGTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

During 2003, the department responded to a total of 242 calls for service. The calls break down as follows:

- Alarm activations 86
- Animal related 1
- Brush fire 5
- Bomb threat 1
- Car fire 5
- Co. detector 3
- Chimney fire 3
- Dumpster or trash fire 6
- Electrical problem 16
- Furnace malfunction 19
- Gas or fuel leak 14
- Good intent call 5
- Investigations 18
- Mutual aid response 14
- Police or medical assist 3
- Propane odor 3
- Structure fire 18
- Smoke condition no fire 11
- Vehicle accidents 7
- Water related problem 4

The property value loss totaled approximately \$560,000.

I would like to thank all the members of the department for voluntarily donating many hours to answer these calls. Additional volunteer hours were spent training and practicing firefighter skills, sometimes traveling out of town or even out of state to attend fire schools. The department also continued its policy of teaching fire prevention to local schools and other organizations.

The department added a multi-purpose vehicle made available by the Town to be used for traffic control, transportation to training and fire prevention seminars. Earlier this year the department, using Homeland Security funds, acquired a hazardous materials decontamination trailer from the State Of Vermont. It contains equipment that would be used at a Haz Mat incident in our community or as part of a network of trailers around the state that would respond anywhere in the State if needed. The Select Board authorized the replacement of two older pumper trucks. The new vehicles should be ready for deliver in July of 2004.

Three past members and one active member passed away this year.

Past member John Ahearn, Stark Hose Company

Past member Charles White, Putnam Hose Company

Past member James Dwyer, Bradford Hook and Ladder Company

Active member Tom Dwyer, Bradford Hook and Ladder Company

We appreciate the many years of service these men gave to the community. They will be greatly missed.

I would like to thank all the members of the Department, those who were part of the Battle Day Committee, those Captains and Lieutenants who serve the Department well, and the two Assistant Chiefs, Jeff Gauthier and Brian Billert, who continuously help this department function well.

Respectfully submitted,
Philip J. Frasier, Fire Chief

VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

The Vermont Department of Health works to protect and improve the health of all citizens. The following are some of the essential services available to residents of **Bennington**.

* * * * *

Bioterrorism - Emergency Preparedness: The Vermont Department of Health is actively working with local, state and federal agencies to assure a rapid and effective response to bioterrorism and other public health threats or emergencies. The local health department in Bennington is involved with: early identification of disease entities; investigating disease sources; providing accurate and timely information to the public and health professionals; collaborating with other agencies during biological, environmental or weather events; planning regional responses with hospitals and LEPCs; and planning of and participation in joint exercises.

Food & Lodging Inspections: National surveys show that more people are eating out more often. Public health sanitarians inspect eating establishments (restaurants, schools, fairs) to decrease the risk of food borne disease outbreaks. The five greatest risks for food borne outbreaks are: keeping food too long at improper temperatures, inadequate cooking, contaminated equipment, food from an unsafe source, and poor personal hygiene among food handlers. Inspections include review of a 44-item check list to evaluate food storage, preparation and handling as well as to identify where there is a high likelihood of practices contributing to illness if left uncorrected. Of the 93 establishments in Bennington, 144 inspections were completed by a sanitarian during 2002.

Reportable Disease Case Investigations: Infectious diseases continue to be a major source of illness, disability and death in the U.S. and Vermont, accounting for 25% of all doctor visits each year. The Health Department investigates all cases of disease such as meningitis, hepatitis, pertussis (whooping cough), and infectious diarrhea to determine their source, to recommend control measures (including current treatment standards) and to prevent further spread of the disease. In 2002, the department investigated 115 cases of disease in Bennington County.

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children ('WIC'): One of the most effective ways to improve the health of the overall population is to improve nutrition and physical activity. WIC improves the health of pregnant and postpartum women, infants and young children by assuring access to health care, teaching families about good nutritional practices, and providing an individually designed package of nutritious food to eligible individuals. During 2002, 969 women, infants and children living in Bennington received foods as well as health screening and individualized nutrition education through this program. The average value of foods provided is \$35.00 per person per month.

Town Health Officer Program: Every town in Vermont has a town health officer who is nominated by the select board and appointed by the commissioner of health. Town health officers work on a variety of environmental and health issues, and respond to calls on public health concerns as varied as animal bites, West Nile virus, rental code complaints, and septic systems. The Health Department supports health officers with training, information and technical assistance. Your town health officer's report describes the nature of calls received for Bennington. During 2002, the Health Department assisted your town health officer and town residents 11 times.

Vaccine-Preventable Diseases: Proper vaccination protects children and adults against many diseases, saves health care dollars, and minimizes sick leave from school or work. Immunization has reduced reportable cases of preventable diseases in Vermont to record low levels. Still, total annual hospital charges from vaccine-preventable disease in Vermont is \$2.6M, and each year 150 to 200 Vermonters die of pneumonia or influenza. During 2002, the Health Department distributed 9105 doses of vaccine to health care providers in Bennington County. This represents a value of \$127,348.65 to these communities, especially children living in Bennington.

West Nile Virus (WNV) Surveillance: WNV first appeared in the U.S. in New York City in 1999 and has become well established in the United States. Birds, mammals and people can get WNV from the bite of an infected mosquito. The Vermont Departments of Health and Agriculture conduct surveillance for WNV each year from June until cold weather limits mosquito activity in the fall. In 2003, 5 Town Health Officers in different parts of the state also participated in the program, assisting primarily with mosquito trapping. As of September 19, 2003: 450 mosquito pools were tested, with nine positive for WNV, and three horses have tested positive (one each from Addison, Orleans and Franklin Counties). In Bennington County from June-Sept. 19th 2003, 38 dead birds were reported, 13 were tested, and 3 were found to be infected with West Nile virus. There were no reported human or equine cases reported during this same time period.

* * * * *

New public health issues emerge every year. Some challenges being addressed by the Health Department include emergency preparedness and response to disease threats like SARS or potential acts of bioterrorism; expansion of substance abuse prevention and treatment; and improving health care for people with chronic conditions like diabetes, asthma and cardiovascular disease.

If you would like more information about these efforts, or if you have a public health concern, please call the Bennington District Office at 802-447-3531. Please visit our web site at www.HealthyVermonters.info for information on health topics, public health emergency preparedness and response, news releases, publications, reports and general public health information.

PUBLIC WORKS Highway Division

Once the snow and the cold started for winter 2002-2003, it seemed that spring would never arrive. We went through 4,500 tons of salt, 3,500 yards of sand and many hours of overtime. In order to maintain the Town effectively, it is divided into four zones, each zone takes three hours to maintain from start to finish. These same zones are used to plan road and sidewalk rebuilding. We try to do sections of roads and sidewalks in each zone to be fair to all tax payers. It is important that the Town increase pavement overlay and chip seal

work so that more miles per year are rebuilt or resurfaced. This would reduce our annual maintenance cost in the long run.

On September 12, 2003, the President declared that a major disaster existed in the State of Vermont based on damage from severe storms and flooding during the period of July 21-August 18, 2003. A tornado touched down in Bennington and caused severe property damage. It took a week to clear all debris that had fallen on Town roadways. This winter we hope to clean the downed trees that we up rooted on Mt. Anthony where the tornado did its greatest damage. The Town of Bennington applied for and was awarded \$33,526 in grant money from FEMA for the repair, replacement or restoration of disaster damaged facilities owned by the public or that serve a public purpose.

PAVING

Paving was completed on Depot Street from Hunt Street to County Street. Depot Street from County Street to River Street will be completed this year. This coming year we will be working on an Enhancement Project on Depot Street from River Street to Main Street. This Enhancement Project will include removal of existing sidewalks, curbs, paving, installation of street lights and associated electrical system, and installation of a new concrete sidewalk.

Other projects completed include Burgess Road from Main Street to Center Street, Leonard Street, Maple Street, Morse Road, Orchard Road, Houran Road, East Street, West Street and Center Street, the Bennington Station Parking lot, and County Street from Safford to Grove Street, where water line and sewer manhole work were also included.

Two major culverts failed this year, one on West Main Street and one on Prospect Street. The West Main Street culvert was repaired by a private contractor. The Highway Department repaired the Prospect Street culvert.

Sidewalk Rebuilds

Gage Street from North Street to Park Street on the north side of County was completed.

Respectfully submitted,
Patrick M. Kinney, Highway Superintendent

PUBLIC WORKS

Water Resources/Water & Sewer Divisions

Water Resources Statistics

Our Permit System provides us with the following Year-End Statistics:

Total Water Line Repairs Made:	32
Lead Water Lines Replaced:	8
Total Water System Bacteria Samples Taken:	203

Our Water Filtration Plant Instrumentation supplies us with the following totals:

Total Water Processed at Woodford Plant:	627 million gallons
Total Water Pumped from Morgan Spring:	4.3 million gallons
Average 2003 water used per day:	1.73 million gallons/day

Our Wastewater Treatment Plant Instrumentation supplies us with the following totals:

Total Gallons Treated:	1.72 billion gallons
Average Gallons per day:	4.70 million gallons
Average % Solids Removed:	97 %
Average % BOD Removed:	96 %
Total Septage Received	813,950 gallons
Total Compost Produced:	**No Compost was produced due to fire and rebuild of Dewatering/Composting System

The Calendar year 2003 was dominated by major projects for the Water Resources Department. The first project was the rebuilding of the Dewatering-Compost facility at the Wastewater Plant in North Bennington, which was destroyed by a fire on August 12, 2002. The newly rebuilt facility saw some floor plan changes, which made the new building much more operator friendly. The office space, which was previously in a remote area, has been rebuilt as a mezzanine overlooking all aspects of the dewatering and composting process. An upgraded computer system will allow operators to more efficiently operate the system. They will have access to important data and reports at just the touch of a keypad. A new compost agitator replaces the old unit, which was believed to be the origin of the fire. I am happy to say that our staff has been operating the new facility since early December with good success. We are confident that the compost product produced by this new process will be as good if not better than the compost produced before the devastating fire.

The second project was the planning for a major upgrade of the Finish Water Storage and Disinfection Process at the Water Filtration Plant in Woodford. The water staff worked throughout the year with the Town's engineers reviewing plans and specifications as well as providing valuable input for this necessary upgrade process. The final design plans were presented to the Bennington Select Board in November. A follow-up meeting was held on a snowy Saturday with Woodford residents and Town Officials at the Filtration Plant in Woodford to work through concerns that were presented as the result of these planned updates. The Select Board gave final approval for the \$7 million plan in early December. A bond vote will be put before the voters of the Town of Bennington at the Town meeting in March of 2004.

The necessary improvements to be made during this upgrade are a direct result of new Federal Safe Drinking Water Rules that have been put into effect over the past few years. It is anticipated that these rules will become even more stringent in the next five years. It is expected that this upgrade and improvements will put us back into full compliance not only now but for the foreseeable future as well. The permitting process has already begun with the State of Vermont. Bennington and Woodford residents can expect to see additional public meetings and presentations on this project before the March bond vote.

The third major project for our division was the State of Vermont Paving Project, which took place in the late summer and fall of 2003. Water and Sewer crews spent a significant amount of time rebuilding and replacing water and sewer lines as well as manholes in the project area. This was only the first phase of a multi-phase paving project by the State of Vermont. Additional phases will begin in the spring of 2004 and will move East along Main Street to a point near the Woodford Town Line. Residents along this route can expect water and sewer personnel to begin line and structure rehabilitation again in April, 2004.

The Water Resources Division also replaced 600 feet of water main on County Street this past year. New copper water services and fire hydrants were installed during this upgrade. Five new sewer manholes and a small amount of new PVC sewer main were also replaced as part of this project. A coordinated effort with the Highway Department allowed us to complete planned curb and sidewalk rehabilitations in this section of County Street as well. Look for the next phase of this project to begin in the Spring of 2004.

The Wastewater Staff also began the daunting task of performing a Total Wastewater System Needs Assessment. This is a federally mandated program that affects all municipal wastewater treatment plants and collection systems. An engineering firm was hired to assist us with the assessment program and the Phase I Report is now complete. This report highlights key areas of the plant and collection system that need upgrading. The staff, along with the engineer, will prioritize those needs for budget and planning purposes. Additional assessment work is being planned for Spring 2004 to identifying Infiltration and Inflow problems throughout the town.

Respectfully submitted,
Terrance A. Morse, Water Resources Superintendent

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

The activities of the Economic & Community Development Department include encouraging job retention and creation, assisting downtown revitalization efforts, promoting housing rehabilitation, assisting the Historic Preservation Commission, administering the revolving loan programs, and working on special projects.

Economic Development

The Economic & Community Development Department serves as the liaison between the Town and the various groups working on economic development issues. In this capacity, the Department interacts regularly with the Bennington County Industrial Corporation, the Bennington Area Chamber of Commerce, the Bennington County Regional Commission, the Better Bennington Corporation, the Downtown Improvement Commission, the Vermont Department of Employment and Training, and the School and Workforce Partnership.

Economic Development issues received a great deal of attention during 2003. The Economic and Community Development Department participated with the aforementioned partner organizations through the Bennington Economic Development Committee (BEDC) to support business recruitment, expansion and retention efforts.

While plant closings and layoffs draw headlines, the real story of 2003 was the slow and steady addition of jobs at some of our Town's most critical employers - NSK (formerly Nastech), Vermont Composites, Abacus, and others. Through the restructuring of a previous loan the Town was able to assist Vermont Composites in purchasing new machinery to allow a significant increase in production capabilities.

The year-end announcement of a Federal appropriation that will lead to the creation of the Bennington Microtechnology Center is the most exciting news in our region in some time. This facility will be the only one of its kind in the country and will provide state-of-the-art research capabilities for both governmental and private sector entities developing micro manufacturing capabilities. The Center's first client will be the United States Navy. The Bennington Microtechnology Center will put Bennington in a strategic position in this developing industry.

Commercial development, especially along the Rte. 67A Corridor, was significant in 2003, with Carbone Honda/Toyota and Home Depot making major investments in that area. We expect that location to see additional development in 2004 with a new hotel and restaurant already in planning.

2003 also saw work on a new Bennington County Regional Economic Development Plan. This effort, co-sponsored by the Bennington County Industrial Corporation and the Bennington County Regional Commission, will provide valuable information and a blueprint for our economic development efforts for the next several years.

Downtown Revitalization

Downtown Bennington welcomed several new and expanded businesses in 2003, and the Town was pleased to assist some of them through our revolving loan program. Downtown Reinvestment fund grant projects were completed at the Panache building, the Ritchie Block, and at 210 South Street.

Also at 210 South Street, the property transferred ownership in 2003. Applejack Development Ltd. will begin renovations at the property in early 2004, and expects to have business office occupants by spring.

North Bennington applied for, and was granted, Village Center designation status from the Vermont Downtown Program. The Village will now be eligible for benefits similar to those available to Downtown Bennington, such as tax credits for fire and life safety code work, and for the rehabilitation of historic buildings.

Finally, the Town auctioned the long-vacant property at 116 North Street. This building will begin to see substantial improvement in early 2004.

Depot Street Enhancement

The Town was awarded a Vermont Transportation Enhancements grant to continue downtown streetscape improvements similar to those completed on Main, North and South Streets. The work, slated to include sidewalk, drainage and lighting upgrades, will take place in Summer 2004. This project will greatly enhance pedestrian access along this corridor, while improving safety for both pedestrians and motorists.

Historic Preservation

The Community Development Department acts as part-time staff to the Historic Preservation Commission. Please see the Historic Preservation Commission's report.

Revolving Loan Programs

The Department administers a housing rehabilitation loan program and an economic development loan program. The Townwide Housing Rehabilitation Program makes loans available to income qualified owners and landlords providing housing for income-qualified tenants for housing rehabilitation activities. The Bennington Revolving Loan Program makes loans available to new or expanding businesses for improvements and equipment purchases. A new fund created as Abacus Automation repays a CDBG loan was established in 2000. This money will be available to assist businesses who will retain or add jobs available to persons of low or moderate income.

Townwide Housing Loan Program

Present Loan Portfolio Principal:	\$327,042
Number of Loans in Portfolio:	23
Available to Loan as of December 31, 2003:	\$131,569

Bennington Revolving Loan Program

Present Loan Portfolio Principal: \$462,274

Number of Loans in Portfolio: 17

Available to Loan as of December 31, 2003: \$339,498

Bennington Low & Moderate Income Job Program

Available to Loan as of December 31, 2003: \$ 70,428

Special Projects

The Community Development Department was involved in a variety of other projects this year. These included grant applications and administration, and activities related to advocacy for legislation important to the Town and the region.

LIST OF GRANTS RECEIVED 2003

<u>Source</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
State of VT	\$200,000	East Road Sidewalk Project
CLG	\$ 1,230	Design Assistance Program

Please feel free to contact me with your questions, concerns, and suggestions.

Respectfully submitted,

William B. Colvin, Economic & Community Development Director

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) members serve the Development Review Board, Select Board and Planning Commission in an advisory capacity, and in so doing, help to coordinate activities that are important to Bennington's preservation goals. As a participant in Vermont's Certified Local Government (CLG) Program, the HPC has the ability to promote the value of historic resources in local community development efforts. Through partnerships at the local, state, and federal level, this program allows the Commission to provide grants and technical assistance to the Town for a range of activities that encourage preservation of our historic and archaeological resources. The Commission works with Bennington's Director of Economic & Community Development, Bill Colvin, who serves as our Secretary.

During the past year, the HPC continued to work closely with local government and community organizations in efforts to identify and strengthen preservation goals within the community, while encouraging responsible economic development. Of special note, was the opportunity to provide input to the Development Review Board on projects located within the Design Review District.

During 2003, the HPC utilized grant funding to identify the common visual characteristics and boundaries of Bennington's historic neighborhoods. The goal of this project was to help community members become more aware of the features that define their neighborhoods and how they can protect, improve, or rehabilitate these features. This is the initial phase of a larger project that will look at the history of each neighborhood and how these special areas helped to create Bennington's unique character.

This past year marked the beginning of community-wide cooperation in efforts to safeguard our historic and archaeological resources. The HPC looks forward to next year and the opportunity to work with community members.

Respectfully submitted,
Sharon Yorke, Chair

DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT COMMISSION

The Downtown Improvement Commission is made up of five volunteer Commissioners appointed by the Select Board, and meets once each month. All meetings are warned and open to the public.

The Downtown Improvement Commission's purpose is as follows:

- To oversee public money, currently \$45,000, raised within the Downtown Improvement District
- To advocate for continual downtown improvements
- To ensure the charter mandate establishing the Downtown Improvement District is carried out

The Downtown Improvement Commission, the Town, and the Better Bennington Corporation act as partners to continually make progress in identifying, maintaining, and developing a pleasing and functionally effective downtown. The Downtown Improvement Commission continues to guide the promotion of the District and assist in addressing public improvements.

The Downtown Improvement Commission contracts with the Better Bennington Corporation whose mission is downtown revitalization. The Better Bennington Corporation utilizes a nationally recognized method of achieving results, through the "National Main Street Strategy", and has a track record of effectiveness.

The Downtown Improvement Commission, along with the Better Bennington Corporation, invites everyone to participate in the continued efforts for downtown revitalization.

Respectfully submitted,
David Newell, Chair

BETTER BENNINGTON CORPORATION

2003 was the year in which five task forces devoted to History and Heritage, Arts and Culture, Vermont Products, Recreation and Entertainment, Business and Downtown Living completed their work and implementation was begun on selected projects. For this effort we owe a great deal to the chairs of the task forces, respectively by Bob Matteson, Justine Scanlon, Jay Zwynenburg, Dave Newell, and Cinda Morse. Implementation began early with the establishment of the Walloomsac Farmer's Market from June to October and the April opening of the Downtown Welcome Center. To support the Welcome Center, a Downtown Docents program was established which continues to be a great asset. BBC follows the example of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street program, dividing its activities into four major areas:

Economic Development

This committee had the chief responsibility for analyzing the reports of the task forces and setting priorities. It worked closely with a sub-committees, The Business Recruitment Committee and Business Retention Committee whose efforts led to the establishment of businesses like Nature's Closet and the Village Chocolate Shoppe as well as surveys on downtown's customer base and the training merchants desired.

Design

Bennington in Bloom continued to provide flowers for planters and hanging baskets with financial assistance from the Town and the community. The Design Committee's design for an informational sign system has been implemented. Effort is being made to create lighting solutions for downtown's dark places.

Marketing

Downtown's first comprehensive marketing and advertising campaign saw us purchase space for an overall downtown ad in several venues. Planning for a second year includes Channel-13 spots thanks to the support of our merchants and the Regional Marketing Agency. Mayfest, Summer in the Park, Midnight Madness and the Holiday Tree Lighting, all broke records for attendance. June Arts Weekends and A Hunted House were added to the calendar. The kiosk at the Four Corners was designated as one of six Molly Stark By-way information centers.

Organization

BBC obtained the Status of a 501c3 tax-exempt organization so that charitable contributions can be made to us and we can apply for grants that were closed to us. In partnership with the Town of Bennington and the Bennington Area Chamber of Commerce, BBC participated in the redesign of bennington.com. and we are now handling our own updating.

BBC's success would not be possible without our partnerships and the cooperation and support we receive from individuals within the community. Our thanks go to the Town of Bennington, the Downtown Improvement Commission, the Bennington Area Chamber of Commerce, the Community College of Vermont, Southern Vermont College, the Bennington Garden Club, the Bennington Museum, our corporate sponsors, and the many citizens who have been involved in the Task Force process.

Respectfully submitted,
Ted Corbett, Executive Director

BENNINGTON SENIOR CENTER

The Bennington Senior Center continues to successfully meet its mission with an exceptionally dedicated staff, top notch programming, and an enthusiastic level of involvement by our participants. Our mission is to: engage persons 50 plus (and their guests) in the life-long learning process by developing social, recreational, creative, and cultural programs which promote physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being and enable active participation in the center and community.

Our center, a town-owned and taxpayer-funded facility, occupies the second floor of the Senior Citizen's Service Center at 124 Pleasant Street. We offer a wide variety of programs and activities including sculpture and painting classes, quilting and sewing, dance and yoga, bridge and scrabble, BINGO, and travel, with a focus on art and culture. We design our programming based on the requests of our participants and our budgetary constraints. There are no membership fees and program costs are based on a non-profit concept.

A major change occurred at the center during the month of November, when Arla Foster retired due to illness. I assumed the role of Director of the Center after serving for over five years as Activities Director. During my tenure as Activities Director I was instrumental in developing numerous popular programs, activities and trips offered to our participants, and I have spent countless hours "on the road" providing transportation for the many cultural events we offer, as well as the door-to-door shopping services we provide.

In December we hired Ann M. Pistocco, former Administrative Coordinator at Park McCullough House in North Bennington, as our part-time Administrative Assistant. Other members of our "bare bones" staff, also on a part time basis, are Josie Shepard, Administrative Assistant, and Muriel Jacobs, Activities Assistant, funded through the courtesy of NCOA Vermont.

Our dedicated volunteers – without whom we couldn't operate – have given over 1,950 hours of their time and knowledge during the past year. The commitment of these dedicated men and women is the key to our success and represents tremendous savings in paid labor hours.

We completed our energy saving project this year with the final phase of the conversion of our inefficient stored electric heating system to more cost-effective propane. The comfort level of the building has increased dramatically. Our thanks to Energy Efficient Vermont who helped us fund the cost of the conversion.

The new vehicle we acquired last year has proven to be of tremendous help to our participants who had difficulty boarding our former, cramped van. We have received many words of gratitude from our more physically challenged riders for our choice of this roomier, more comfortable, easier to access passenger coach. We are still working to raise the funds needed for a graphics design on the coach. The center's quilters are also attempting to accumulate enough money to purchase a long-arm quilting machine, which will be well utilized by our quilters when their goal is achieved.

My goal as Director will be to increase the use of the facility by offering new and more varied no cost, in-house programs, such as an exercise program, and a computer program, which will not have a negative impact on our budget. The Wednesday movie matinee program, instituted in October, has proven to be extremely popular, with many "standing-room-only" shows.

Our quarterly publication has been renamed to more closely reflect its purpose as a source of information regarding our programs and events. Look for *Senior Community News* at various locations around Town or by subscription. *Senior Community News* lists all of our on-going and upcoming activities and is the best source of information about the senior center. You may receive a free first copy by calling the center at 802-442-1052.

The Bennington Senior Center is open Monday-Friday, 8:00am-4:00pm; however, if you need personal attention, please call first.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan L. Hoag, Director

BENNINGTON PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

The Bennington Recreation Center is located on 655 Gage Street and is the Administrative Office as well as one of the many facilities the Town of Bennington Parks & Recreation Department maintains. The Center is a municipal facility and is supported by the Bennington taxpayers. October of 2003 was the Recreation Center's 30th Anniversary.

The Department is staffed with five full time employees; Director, Assistant to the Director, Aquatics Director, Maintenance, and Custodial Maintenance. There are approximately 45 part time and seasonal part time employees to perform various jobs which include: evening office supervision, game room supervision, weight room supervision, life guarding, summer playgrounds, sports camps, swim lessons, holiday activities and skating rink supervision.

A membership or daily fee entitles the user to the six lane, 25 yard heated pool, saunas, showers, weight room, game room and a discount on programs offered by the Recreation Department. The pool is used by our members and non-members for many programs, therapeutic and recreational swimming opportunities. The pool which was re-grouted in September 2003 is maintained at a comfortable level to suit the needs of the variety of ages who use it. The weight room has a combination of traditional free weights, Universal Machine and cardiovascular equipment. Equipment includes dumbbells, Olympic Benches, treadmill, steppers, rowing machines, stationary bike, Elliptical Trainer and a Power Ram Sled which is a hack-machine/leg press.

Aqua-Dynamics, Girl/Boy Scout swims, playgrounds, t-ball, sports camps and holiday activities are a few examples of programs offered by the Department at a minimal fee. A total of \$19,820.00 was brought into the Recreation Center in 2003.

There were approximately 46,353 visits recorded by our Rec Trac System that were either members or customers which paid the daily fee. There were 50,006 visits recorded just for pool use.

The Recreation Center offers the swimming pool and the multi-purpose room for children's birthday parties. The parties are scheduled on Saturday afternoons from 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. with the pool time being 1 hour. The fee of \$50.00 which includes the reserved pool time, certified lifeguard and the room which can be used for cake, ice-cream, pizza, games, etc... If the pool is booked for a party but the room is available, it can be reserved for \$20.00 per hour. There were a total of 30 birthday parties totaling \$1,500.00

At the Stark Street Playground facility, located on Stark Street near Southwestern Vermont Medical Center, there is a small sports field, 4 hoop basketball court which also serves as our ice-rink in the winter months. Stark Street Playground is the site of our 4-7 year old Summer Playground Day Camp. The camp runs for 8 weeks, 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.,

Monday through Friday. The outdoor skating rink is open to the public free of charge. The building is open 4:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, Saturday & Sunday 10:00 a.m. - 8:30 p.m. The building serves as a warming hut with restrooms, television and a small concession stand. Skates can be rented for \$1.00 (some sizes are not available).

Willow Park, located on East Road, contains a pavilion, cooking grills, horseshoe pits, play equipment, Community Built Park, 3 sand volleyball courts, basketball court, lighted ballfield, multi-purpose field, bike path, BMX bike track, theater stage, skate park, and 2 large athletic fields. The town continues improvement to the Lower Willow Athletic Field for expansion of use for the various athletic and community organizations.

The Willow Park Pavilion can be rented from April 1 through the end of October for group picnics, weddings, etc... There were 76 rentals totaling \$1,205.00.

Various adult and youth leagues held practices, camps, tournaments and games at Willow Park, Beech Street, Wellings and Memorial Park fields. Special events including the State Horseshoe Tournament, Memorial Softball Tournament, Young Women's National Qualifier Softball Tournament, Co-Ed National Qualifier Softball Tournament, Men's National Qualifier Softball Tournament, soccer clinics, lacrosse camps, Chamber of Commerce/Bennington Rotary Antique Car Show, Hometown 4th of July Celebration, Catamount BMX races and Regional Races are all held on the Willow Park grounds.

The Recreation Department works with the variety of non-profit and local organizations helping co-ordinate, run or participate in special events including Softball Tournaments, Pumpkin Hunt, Fishing Derby, Tree Lighting Ceremony, Vietnam Veteran's Memorial Day Road Race, Boy and Girl Scouts and the American Red Cross.

If there are any questions or comments pertaining to the above information, you may call 802-442-1053.

Respectfully submitted,
Tracy E. Knights, Parks & Recreation Director

BENNINGTON COMMUNITY BUILT PARK RESERVE FUND

I am pleased to acknowledge the creation of the Bennington Community Built Park Reserve Fund.

This Fund was created in April, 2003, in concert with the Friends of the Bennington Community Built Park from funds collected to maintain the playground equipment, lower bathrooms and stage. As custodian of the funds, the Friends preserved them and helped establish this Fund to assist the Town with long term care issues at the Bennington Community Built Park (Willow Park on East Road). The Fund guidelines follow below.

1. This fund is for the exclusive use of the Bennington Community Built Park located on East Road in Bennington, Vermont.

2. Special consideration will be given to annual sealing of all wooden structures at Willow Park with environmentally safe sealant. The Fund will be used to replenish the wood carpeting under playground equipment, for signs and other equipment as needed.

3. This Fund will be expended on a fifteen (15) year basis to address maintenance issues at the Bennington Community Built Park.

4. *One thousand dollars is restricted to purchase skateboard ramps. This money was given to the Friends by Phoenix Inc.*

Donations to this restricted fund and Memorial plantings are encouraged and are to be handled by the Town of Bennington.

The original balance contained \$17,700. As of June 30th, interest accrued brings the balance to \$17,775.81.

Respectfully,

Stuart A. Hurd, Town Manager

SOLLWAN AND MARY ALEXANDER SLEEMAN MEMORIAL FUND

I am pleased to acknowledge the creation of the Sollwan and Mary Alexander Sleeman Memorial Fund.

This Fund was created in September, 1998, in concert with the Richard A. Sleeman family from funds historically collected to complete the Recreation Center (formerly owned by the YMCA). As custodian of the funds, Richard A. Sleeman preserved them and helped established this Fund to assist the Town with accessibility issues at the Recreation Center. The Fund guidelines follow below.

1. *This memorial fund is for the exclusive use of the Bennington Community Recreation Center located on Gage Street in Bennington, Vermont.*
2. *Special consideration will be given to benefit the handicapped through capital improvements, equipment, or tuition for those in need as it relates to the Recreation Center.*
3. *The Fund will be expended on a ten (10) year annuitized basis for the uses noted above.*
4. *Dr. Richard Alexander Sleeman, Professor, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, North Adams, Massachusetts, represents the Sleeman Family.*

The original fund contained \$52,156.27. When this fiscal year began, the fund contained \$46,266.00. During this year, \$5,274.51 in expenditures were needed to offset ADA improvements at the Recreation Center. Interest earned was added to the Fund at \$663.79 leaving a reserve fund balance of \$41,655.28.

The Town will use the funds over the next six (6) years to address accessibility issues at the Center. We are most fortunate to have this Fund available to us.

Respectfully submitted,

Stuart A. Hurd, Town Manager

PERMITTING, PLANNING AND CODE ENFORCEMENT DEPARTMENT

The Town of Bennington's Permitting, Planning and Code Enforcement Department administers many Town issued permits (including Building Permits, Zoning Permits, Sign Permits, Taxi Licenses, Vendor's Licenses and others), provides staff support for the Town of Bennington Development Review Board and Planning Commission and enforces the Town of Bennington Zoning Bylaw, Sign Ordinance, Building Code and other local ordinances (The Town's Building Inspector also enforces the Vermont Fire Prevention and Building Code on behalf of the State for most buildings).

The Permitting, Planning and Code Enforcement Department is made up of the following staff members: Daniel W. Monks, Planning Director, Larry McLeod, Chief Building Inspector, Kevin Goodhue, Building Inspector and Code Enforcement Officer, and Kelly Lemieux, Administrative Assistant. The Building Inspector's report and Planning Director's report follow:

BUILDING INSPECTOR'S REPORT

During the past year there were 354 permits issued with an estimated value of \$14,728,024.00. The following is a breakdown of permits issues in 2003 with a comparison to the previous year.

Type	2002 Permits	Dollar Volume	2003 Permits	Dollar Volume
Single Family Dwelling	17	\$2,032,100.00	30	\$3,108,574.00
Mobile homes	7	\$141,000.00	10	\$346,000.00
Apartments	0	\$0.00	0	\$0.00
Condominiums	0	\$0.00	0	\$0.00
Residential Renovations	55	\$286,624.00	47	\$357,850.00
Residential Additions	15	\$405,114.00	27	\$973,660.00
Apartment Renovations	5	\$42,450.00	11	\$116,500.00
Commercial Construction	16	\$2,734,615.00	3	\$565,000.00
Commercial Renovations	17	\$271,455.00	29	\$2,329,340.00
Industrial Construction	4	\$1,285,000.00	3	\$86,900.00
Industrial Renovations	7	\$192,500.00	0	\$0.00
Garages	18	\$237,100.00	28	\$291,800.00
Sheds	39	\$46,312.00	29	\$54,654.00
Decks	40	\$89,616.00	43	\$109,060.00
Pools	15	\$55,725.00	13	\$52,919.00
Institutions	14	\$20,666,500.00	17	\$6,165,500.00
Signs	37	\$33,288.00	41	\$96,920.00
Subdivisions	7	\$0.00	1	\$0.00
Use and Zoning	8	\$0.00	5	\$0.00
Septic Systems	7	\$26,600.00	6	\$25,100.00
Home Occupation	5	\$0.00	4	\$0.00
Propane/Storage Tank	1	\$1,000.00	3	\$19,965.00
Boilers	2	\$26,518.00	3	\$28,282.00
Tents	0	\$0.00	1	\$0.00
Totals	336	\$28,573,517.00	354	\$14,728,024.00

The large construction projects completed or started this year included the Mount Anthony Middle School, Dunkin Donuts, Wendy's, Home Depot, Carbone Honda and the House of Tile Warehouse.

The Town has completed its sixth year under the Fire and Building Code Agreement with the Vermont Department of Labor and Industry. Applicants have saved significant money in fees they didn't have to submit to the state over the past six years. The agreement includes all occupancy types except for Public Schools and Health Care facilities. The agreement assigns to Bennington the responsibility for Plan Review, Fire Inspections and Enforcement of the Vermont Fire Prevention and Building Code. We hope to include educational occupancies in the agreement in the near future.

The past year has been spent closing out previous open permits and performing various types of inspections. Significant time is also spent on investigating housing code complaints, issuing notices of unsafe structures, ordering demolitions and closing down unfit dwellings. The Town also issued 629 Certificates of Building and Zoning Compliance which netted the Town \$15,725.00. The Town issued 354 Zoning and Building Permits with fees that netted \$50,296.56, 40 Sign Permits with fees that netted \$3,735.00 and ten Vendor Permits with fees that netted \$1,600.00.

We would like to remind all residents that almost all types of renovations and construction requires building permits. If you replace any existing structure, such as a deck, porch, shed stairs, garage etc., you need a permit. If you perform any renovation work inside your home such as adding a room in your basement, any plumbing, electrical or furnace replacement, removing/adding walls or rooms, a permit is required. If you install a septic system, propane tank, fabric building or a swimming pool a permit is required. Please contact the Code Enforcement Office 442-1037 before you start any work to determine if a permit is needed.

Don't forget..... all rental properties now require wired in Smoke Detectors with battery back-up!

Respectfully submitted,

Larry McLeod, Chief Building Inspector and Fire Marshall

Kevin J. Goodhue, Building Inspector/Fire Marshall and Code Enforcement Officer

HEALTH OFFICER'S REPORT

My three-year appointment as Health Officer began on March 1, 2001 and will expire on February 29, 2004. The Health Officer is the Town Official who is responsible for Public Health Problems in their Town. Health Officers have the power of the Vermont Commissioner of Health and are agents of the State Health Department. Health Officers have the authority to enforce any of the Vermont Health regulations in their Town. The Select Board is the local Board of Health with the Health Officer serving as the Secretary and Executive Officer for Bennington, North Bennington and Old Bennington. The responsibilities of the Health Officer can be wide ranging, however, most of the time is spent in the following categories:

Rabies Management

I received and investigated 47 reported animal bites to humans in 2003; 32 from dogs, 11 from cats, 2 bats, 1 mouse and 1 squirrel. This compares to 55 in 2002, 45 in 2001, 30 in 2000, 38 in 1999, 40 in 1998. 114 pets were vaccinated at the annual Town of Bennington Rabies Clinic held on March 1, 2003. Many thanks to the Southwestern Vermont Medical Center Emergency Department for their prompt and accurate bite reports.

Rental Housing

I investigated numerous complaints pertaining to Rental Housing Health Code issues. The Vermont Rental Housing Health Code is a Statewide uniform code that specifies the minimum standards for all rental housing. As the Building and Fire Inspector for the Town, I can now include the Health Code Requirements in all of those type inspections.

Other Public Health Issues

The balance of time was spent investigating such matters as garbage complaints, inadequate water supplies, rodent/roach complaints and failed septic systems. This office participated in the State of Vermont West Nile virus surveillance program this summer. Mosquitos were trapped at two locations and forwarded to the District Health Office for further evaluation. It is expected that the program will be repeated this coming summer with even more traps in the Bennington area.

A persistent health concern is burning garbage/paper outside in burn barrels. I remind all residents that this practice is illegal in the State of Vermont. I was successful in obtaining voluntary compliance with all public health problems this year and appreciate the cooperation from all involved. A special thank you to the Local Department of Health Office. Please feel free to contact me regarding any questions or concerns you may have.

Respectfully submitted,
Larry McLeod, Health Officer

PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Planning Commission along with the Planning Department performs municipal planning functions for Bennington, including the development of the Town Plan and Zoning Bylaw.

In 2003, the Planning Commission, proposed a comprehensive revision of the Town's Zoning Bylaw to the Select Board for approval. The Select Board is expected to begin public hearings regarding the proposed revision to the Zoning Bylaw in January 2004. The Planning Commission, with the help of a consultant, drafted proposed Development Guidelines for the Planned Commercial District. Public Hearings regarding the proposed guidelines are scheduled for early 2004. In addition, the Planning Commission completed, with the help of a traffic consultant, the Northside Drive Transportation Study and Plan for improving vehicular and pedestrian traffic movement along the Northside Drive corridor.

The Development Review Board is responsible for reviewing and issuing land use permits for all significant development within the Town. 2003 was another busy year for the Development Review Board. Among the more notable projects reviewed by the

Development Review Board were the renovation of 324 Main Street (CCV Building) by the State of Vermont for State Offices; a new Dunkin Donuts at 209 Northside Drive, a new Wendy's restaurant on Northside Drive, an expansion of the Merriam Graves facility on Harwood Hill and the construction of a new facility for Doxsee Roofing in the Morse Industrial Park.

Respectfully submitted,
Daniel W. Monks, Permitting Director

**DEPARTMENT OF ASSESSMENT
BOARD OF LISTERS**

The Assessor's Office and the Board of Listers have successfully completed the last phase of the "rolling reappraisal", with values implemented April 1st, 2003. We will begin reviewing properties again for reappraisal July, 2004, with new values being implemented in 2005. Business personal property was not taxed in 2003 and will not be taxed in the future.

This office mailed 1,200 Change of Appraisal notices May 29th, 2003. The Board of Listers heard 165 grievances, with forty-four (44) appeals forwarded to the Board of Civil Authority. Two(2) appeals have been submitted to the State Board of Appraisers and three(3) appeals to Superior Court. There is one(1) appeal pending to Court for 2002.

The grand list for 2003 increased 1.48 percent from \$720,533,737 to \$731,196,100. The State's Equalization Study for 2003 shows Bennington's common level of appraisal at 97.30 percent and our coefficient of dispersion at 7.25 percent.

A new assessing software program was installed in the fall of 2003. This software is compatible with the Town's accounting and tax programs and in compliance with the State of Vermont's new tax laws.

Respectfully submitted,
Lindalee Hayden
Office Supervisor

2004 VERMONT	Declaration of Vermont Homestead	FORM HS-131
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* 0 4 1 3 1 1 1 9 9 *

DUE DATE: April 15, 2004
PRINT in BLUE or BLACK INK

You MUST file this form if you are a Vermont resident as of January 1, 2004 and own and occupy your homestead on April 1, 2004.

VT Resident Social Security Number	- - - - -	Spouse or CU Partner Social Security Number	- - - - -
VT Resident Last Name		First Name	Initial
Spouse or CU Partner Last Name		First Name	Initial
Mailing Address (Number and Street/Road or PO Box)			
City/Town		State	Zip Code
Location of Homestead		<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"> 1 VT School District Code 2 City/Town of Legal Residence on 04/01/2004 State </div>	
number, street / road name			
3. SPAN Number (REQUIRED)	- - - - -	(From your 2003/2004 property tax bill)	

4. Special Situations Check if you are:

Grantor and sole beneficiary of a Revocable Trust that owns the property.

Homestead on farm property

Life Estate owner of the Property.

Owner of homestead property that crosses town boundaries. (If so, you must file a declaration for each town.)

5. Business Use of Dwelling (See instructions. If no business use, enter 00.00) 5. . 00 %

6. Rental Use of Dwelling (See instructions. If no rental use, enter 00.00) 6. . 00 %

7. Business or Rental Use of Improvements or Other Buildings.

Are improvements or other buildings located on your parcel, other than the dwelling, used for business or rented out? Yes No

SIGN HERE				Under penalties of perjury, I have examined the above information and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it is true, correct, and complete. I further declare I am a Vermont resident and the above homestead is my principal dwelling as of April 1, 2004. Preparers cannot use Declaration information for purposes other than preparing the Declaration.		
	Keep a copy for your records.	Your signature	Date	Telephone Number (optional)		
Check here if authorizing the VT Department of Taxes to discuss this Declaration with your preparer.						
Preparer's Use Only	Preparer's signature	Date	Check if self-employed	Preparer's SSN or PTIN		
	Firm's name (or yours if self-employed) and address				EIN	
					Preparer's Telephone Number	

MAIL TO: Vermont Department of Taxes, PO Box 1779, Montpelier, VT 05601-1779

See instructions for this form on page 110.

Form HS-131

2003 Births

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name of Child</u>	<u>Residence</u>
1/1/03	Finley Jean Mayer	Rupert, VT
1/3/03	Emma Julia Hall	Landgrove, VT
1/4/02	Lauren Michaela Felion	Peru, VT
1/7/03	Bryce Patrick Harrington	Sandgate, VT
1/10/03	Niall Patrick Monahan	Arlington, VT
1/10/03	Issalee Victoria Niles	Bennington, VT
1/11/03	Derek Allen McDonald Jr.	Pownal, VT
1/15/03	Dylan James Coulter	Dorset, VT
1/16/03	Cameron Roy Coleman	Bondville, VT
1/16/03	Colton Ray Crawford	Woodford, VT
1/16/03	Ethan David Paligo	Pownal, VT
1/18/03	Kaylee Susan Bushee	Arlington, VT
1/18/03	Tabish Nabeel	Hoosick Falls, NY
1/19/03	Annie May Linendoll	Salem, NY
1/20/03	McKeila Karen Cooney	Cambridge, NY
1/20/03	Charles Peter Gratton	Pownal, VT
1/22/03	Joseph William Carbonaro	Bennington, VT
1/23/03	Liam Thomas Reilly Peacock	Hoosick Falls, NY
1/23/03	Mikela Elizabeth Sousie	White Creek, NY
1/24/03	Aydin William Bain	Greenwich, NY
1/24/03	Samuel George McAlonie	Shushan, NY
1/24/03	Hayden Austin Wilson	Cambridge, NY
1/28/03	Christopher James LaBrake-Krach	Cambridge, NY
128/03	Mackenzie Marie McBride-Keays	Hoosick Falls, NY
1/28/03	William Michael Starenko	Williamstown, MA
1/29/03	Cody Matthew Mullen	Cambridge, NY
1/30/03	Jada Marie Sorel	Bennington, VT
1/30/03	Karley Hazel Streiber	Pawlet, VT
2/2/03	Megan Alice Andrews	Bennington, VT
2/2/03	Michael Alan Andrews III	Bennington, VT
2/3/03	Preston Juan Vazquez	Bennington, VT
2/5/03	Kasidy Rain Ketcham	Bennington, VT
2/6/03	Gabrielle Elizabeth Brandi	Bennington, VT
2/6/03	Taylor Grace Gosselin	Bennington, VT
2/7/03	Matthew Mark Blanchard Jr.	Bennington, VT
2/7/03	Blake Kolten Janovsky	Jacksonville, VT
2/8/03	Martin Lachlan Koenen	Greenfield, NY
2/8/03	Lexia Taylor Stall	Petersburgh, NY
2/9/03	Owen Joseph Hackett	Hoosick Falls, NY
2/9/03	Nicholas Diette Salem	Bennington, VT
2/10/03	Macy Claire Lindsey	Petersburgh, NY
2/10/03	Robert Edward Lucier	Whitingham, VT
2/10/03	Alyne Paryese Mayer	Bennington, VT
2/10/03	Jack Albert Monaghan	Bennington, VT
2/10/03	Laurel Ann Stannard	Dorset, VT
2/10/03	Gideon Noble Werger	Bennington, VT
2/11/03	Jacob Nathaniel Morse	Bennington, VT

2003 Births

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name of Child</u>	<u>Residence</u>	<u>Age</u>
2/13/03	Ellis Kiran Rinchen Topden Glazer	Bennington, VT	10/20/02
2/14/03	Evan Brock Hosley	Arlington, VT	10/21/02
2/15/03	Olivia Louise Baker	Grafton, NY	10/22/02
2/15/03	Alexciyah Faith Woodworth	Valley Falls, NY	10/23/02
2/16/03	Elijah Jeffrey Mason	Bennington, VT	10/24/02
2/17/03	Lauren Elizabeth Crosier	Arlington, VT	10/25/02
2/17/03	Aiden Riley Day Gifford	Eagle Bridge, NY	10/26/02
2/18/03	Cierra Nevaeh Morse	Bennington, VT	10/27/02
2/18/03	Joshua Robert Richter	Bennington, VT	10/28/02
2/20/03	Althea Hope Torrrens-Martin	Manchester, VT	10/29/02
2/21/03	Justin Richard Hamilton	Valley Falls, NY	10/30/02
2/22/03	Makaia Jada Fefee	Bennington, VT	10/31/02
2/23/03	Owen Bailey Hall	Shushan, NY	11/1/02
2/24/03	David William Coons	Pownal, VT	11/2/02
2/25/03	Nicholas Arthur Haytko-DeSalvo	Pownal, VT	11/3/02
2/25/03	Kathryn Ellen Jones	Wilmington, VT	11/4/02
2/25/03	Dallas Kristian Wilson	Hoosick Falls, NY	11/5/02
2/26/03	Xavier Alexander Susee Alvarado	Hoosick Falls, NY	11/6/02
2/26/03	Edwidge Mae Breen	Cohoes, NY	11/7/02
2/26/03	Felicity Leigh Colegrove	Eagle Bridge, NY	11/8/02
2/26/03	Lindsay Marie Hoyt	Pownal, VT	11/9/02
2/27/03	Cara Brooks North	W. Dover, VT	11/10/02
2/28/03	Codie Allison Cross	Mt. Holly, VT	11/11/02
2/28/03	Blake Lauryn Riche	Salem, NY	11/12/02
2/28/03	Brendan John Sullivan	Bennington, VT	11/13/02
2/28/03	Madison Taylor Tift	Bennington, VT	11/14/02
2/28/03	Jamia Danise Velazquez	Bennington, VT	11/15/02
2/28/03	Dylan James Wright	Searsburg, VT	11/16/02
3/1/03	Grace Edna Hope Auspland	Bennington, VT	11/17/02
3/2/03	Charles West Gartner	Cossayuna, NY	11/18/02
3/3/03	Erin Elizabeth McCart	Bennington, VT	11/19/02
3/5/03	Felicity Lynn Helena Harwood	Bennington, VT	11/20/02
3/7/03	Evan Michael Atwell	Cambridge, NY	11/21/02
3/7/03	James Lee Gatlin Jr.	Petersburgh, NY	11/22/02
3/7/03	John Edward Greenaway	Bennington, VT	11/23/02
3/7/03	Samuel Lee Hazelton	Arlington, VT	11/24/02
3/7/03	Benjamin Dakota Pinsonneault	Bennington, VT	11/25/02
3/8/03	Brandon M. Getty	Salem, NY	11/26/02
3/9/03	Jessica Lynn Letourneau	Bennington, VT	11/27/02
3/10/03	Caitlyn Esther Stratton	Arlington, VT	11/28/02
3/12/03	Taylor Aitchison Therriault	Bennington, VT	11/29/02
3/13/03	Henry Emerson Putney	Manchester, VT	11/30/02
3/13/03	Kaiden Riley Simpson	Shaftsbury, VT	12/1/02
3/14/03	Olivia Maddison Hopkins	Cambridge, NY	12/2/02
3/14/03	Jaelyn Marie Lescarbeau	North Adams, MA	12/3/02
3/14/03	Kelsey Ann Schnoop	Pownal, VT	12/4/02
3/15/03	Owen Andrew Kirk	Bennington, VT	12/5/02

2003 Births

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name of Child</u>	<u>Residence</u>
3/16/03	Fiona Eleanor Mooney	Cambridge, NY
3/18/03	William Joseph Merrow II	Bennington, VT
3/18/03	Morgan Elizabeth Pratt	Bennington, VT
3/19/03	Grace Danielle Burhans	Bennington, VT
3/20/03	Quinn Maxwell Liebling	Manchester, VT
3/21/03	Gabriella Jonquil March	Hoosick Falls, NY
3/21/03	Owen Wiley Sachs	Williamstown, MA
3/21/03	David Joshua Wright	Pawlet, VT
3/23/03	Adrienne Michael Marchigiani	Bennington, VT
3/23/03	Jack Tyler Ware	Shaftsbury, VT
3/24/03	Amaya Lexus Belville-King	Bennington, VT
3/24/03	Wesley Jacob Doyle	Berlin, NY
3/24/03	Quinlan Patrick Barber	Dover, VT
3/24/03	Madison Brianna Nieves	Shaftsbury, VT
3/25/03	Alair Donalyn Powers	Manchester, VT
3/26/03	Wyatt Gage Cameron	Cherry Plain, NY
3/26/03	Cameron Michael Parker	Pawlet, VT
3/27/03	Mckayla Jean McLenithan	Cambridge, NY
3/28/03	Sadie Jaynith Boyd	Whitingham, VT
3/28/03	Jasmine Marie Granger	White Creek, NY
3/28/03	Joshua Dylan Landry	Hoosick Falls, NY
3/29/03	Hannah Maria Tarazi	Bennington, VT
3/30/03	Garrett James Smith	Hoosick Falls, NY
3/31/03	Jeffrey Michael Burke	Buskirk, NY
3/31/03	Isabella Christine Barbara Flint	Manchester, VT
4/2/03	Noah Joseph Diedrich	Arlington, VT
4/2/03	Nicole Marie Grover	Hoosick Falls, NY
4/2/03	Dylan Micheal St. Hilaire	Stamford, VT
4/3/03	Cole Ryan Getty	Salem, NY
4/3/03	Mathew Leonard Smith	Bennington, VT
4/3/03	Kirsten Lillian Stannard	Bennington, VT
4/4/03	Kamryn Muriel Greene	Bennington, VT
4/4/03	Cameron Luciano Verruso	Rupert, VT
4/4/03	John Lewis Whalen III	Arlington, VT
4/4/03	Thomas Dominic Whalen II	Arlington, VT
4/6/03	William Evan David Etter	Bennington, VT
4/6/03	Ariana Lynn Violette	Bennington, VT
4/7/03	Andrea Mae Rose Cary	Salem, NY
4/7/03	Joseph Frank Cary	Salem, NY
4/7/03	John Adams Fritz	Bennington, VT
4/7/03	Ella Kimberly Oakes	Cambridge, NY
4/8/03	Benjamin Joseph Atherton	Hoosick Falls, NY
4/9/03	Dylan Michael Berres	Bennington, VT
4/9/03	Kylie Kershaw Cleanthes	Dover, VT
4/10/03	Lillian Margaret Phillips	Eagle Bridge, NY
4/10/03	Sophia Grace Phillips	Eagle Bridge, NY
4/10/03	Andrew David Van Brummelen	Bennington, VT

2003 Births

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name of Child</u>	<u>Residence</u>
4/11/03	Annalee Susan Herbig	Shushan, NY
4/12/03	Jacob Henry Muray Ruggles	Eagle Bridge, NY
4/13/03	Deja Kai LaJeunesse	Bennington, VT
4/14/03	Elizabeth Lee Bush	Bennington, VT
4/14/03	John Anthony Cuccini	Bennington, VT
4/14/03	Wade Landon Greene	Berlin, NY
4/14/03	Larissa Faith Rogers	Pittstown, NY
4/14/03	Khya Ann Stone	Bennington, VT
4/15/03	Justin Parker Maxon	Johnsonville, NY
4/16/03	Olivia Rivard Fitzgerald	Schaghticoke, NY
4/17/03	Austin Jacob Hurley	Bennington, VT
4/18/03	Sierra Lynne Lazelle	Wilmington, VT
4/19/03	Samson Atticus Badger	Dorset, VT
4/19/03	Jonathan Trevor Grant	Stamford, VT
4/20/03	Jade Celeste Marantz	Dorset, VT
4/22/03	Lexus Gabrielle Sausville	Shaftsbury, VT
4/23/03	Abby Boudreau-Boyd Galle	Bennington, VT
4/24/03	Carleigh Mae Woods	Shaftsbury, VT
4/25/03	Jacob Dylan Lamphere	Berlin, NY
4/25/03	Conner Alexander Page	Wilmington, VT
4/26/03	Emanuel Isaiah Cruzado	Bennington, VT
4/26/03	Hunter Loretta Daris	Bennington, VT
4/26/03	Aidan Dianna Senecal	Jacksonville, VT
4/28/03	Ashlyn Renae Parker	Pownal, VT
4/28/03	Robert Darius Simmons Jr.	Manchester, VT
4/28/03	Isaac Allen Virtue	Cambridge, NY
5/2/03	Zachary Ross King	Manchester, VT
5/2/03	Lucas John Nichols Mattison	Pawlet, VT
5/2/03	Ian James Turner	Bennington, VT
5/7/03	Keaton Charles Cossey	Cambridge, NY
5/8/03	Ayla Jeanne Fauler	Buskirk, NY
5/8/03	Andrais Omer Eversun Stetson	Shaftsbury, VT
5/9/03	Asa Wayne Rabideau	Bennington, VT
5/9/03	Hayden Scott Rabideau	Bennington, VT
5/10/03	Joseph Adam Cancellieri	Bennington, VT
5/10/03	Ian Randall Gagnon	Bennington, VT
5/10/03	Maximillian D'Artagnan St. George	Winhall, VT
5/10/03	Ronan Cray Wuerslin	Sandgate, VT
5/11/03	Andrew James Onorato	Bennington, VT
5/12/03	LeeAnn Michelle Rooks	Cambridge, NY
5/13/03	Hallie Gene Wright	Manchester, VT
5/14/03	Trinity Joyce Brown	Wells, VT
5/14/03	Tyler Jacob Bubier	Bennington, VT
5/14/03	Luke Hawkins Cassan	Arlington, VT
5/14/03	Jack Bradley Eastman	Cambridge, NY
5/16/03	Liana May Abedon	Wilmington, VT
5/17/03	Devin Kyle Bice	E. Arlington, VT

2003 Births

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name of Child</u>	<u>Residence</u>
5/17/03	Adam Francis Sargood	Hoosick Falls, NY
5/17/03	Andrew John VanDeWater	Cambridge, NY
5/19/03	Benjamin William Kristiansen	Manchester, VT
5/20/03	Ivan Damien Pusey	Bennington, VT
5/22/03	Sophia Rose Alfieri	Wilmington, VT
5/23/03	Efremia Georgia Geralis	Manchester, VT
5/23/03	Thomas Andrew Kehoe III	Bennington, VT
5/23/03	Sloane Elizabeth Rivers	Bennington, VT
5/26/03	Ashley Marie Pacheco	Hoosick Falls, NY
5/28/03	Hayden Dupuis Sprague	Pownal, VT
5/30/03	Hailey Rose Dufresne	Manchester, VT
5/30/03	Edward Rivr Johnson	Hoosick Falls, NY
5/30/03	Phoebe Mae Thomson	Eagle Bridge, NY
5/31/03	Isabella Rose Baker	Pownal, VT
5/31/03	Joshua Robert MacIntyre	Bennington, VT
5/31/03	Rosabell Brinae Plusch	Pittstown, NY
6/1/03	Tanya Louise Wheeler	Wilmington, VT
6/2/03	Madison Amber Boyer	Bennington, VT
6/2/03	Jackson Walter Decker	S Burlington, VT
6/2/03	Kardar Michael Dickinson	Shaftsbury, VT
6/2/03	Cole Michael Galusha	Bennington, VT
6/3/03	Chloe Grace Jerman	Bennington, VT
6/4/03	Cole Lucas Fraize	Bennington, VT
6/5/03	Allyson Jean Taylor	Wilmington, VT
6/6/03	Crystal Marie Brownell	Pownal, VT
6/6/03	Jayden Irwin Crawford	Wilmington, VT
6/6/03	Jayna Lauren Goldfarb	Stratton, VT
6/6/03	Andrew James Yerdon	Petersburgh, NY
6/8/03	Joseph James Sabo	Salem, NY
6/9/03	Nina Marie Foster	Bennington, VT
6/9/03	Craig James Guetti III	Bennington, VT
6/9/03	Aliviya Grace Nassoiv	Bennington, VT
6/10/03	Daniel Abayomi Aribisala II	Bennington, VT
6/10/03	Ayden Thomas Mylott	Bennington, VT
6/10/03	Bailey Jo Webster	Hoosick, NY
6/11/03	Kionna Lakitta Hayes	Shaftsbury, VT
6/11/03	Kendra Randy Marshall	Hoosick Falls, NY
6/12/03	Junior Fidel Espinosa	Eagle Bridge, NY
6/12/03	Carson Edric Gordon	Bennington, VT
6/12/03	Cole Evan Gordon	Bennington, VT
6/12/03	Theodore James Mirenda	E. Dorset, VT
6/15/03	Zoey Lynn Becker	White Creek, NY
6/16/03	Brianalyn Nevaeh Keyes	Manchester, VT
6/17/03	Emily May Spencer	Woodford, VT
6/18/03	Brooke Logan Jurnak	Rupert, VT
6/19/03	Chantel Monique Goodhue	Bennington, VT
6/20/03	Madison McKenna Wolff	Johnsonville, NY

2003 Births

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name of Child</u>	<u>Residence</u>
6/22/03	Cindy Darlene Merrow	Dorset, VT
6/23/03	Jordan Carter Prouty	Bennington, VT
6/23/03	Marshal Owen Telford	Shaftsbury, VT
6/24/03	Liam David Moore	Bennington, VT
6/25/03	Tyler James Beaudry	Petersburgh, NY
6/26/03	Enrique Robert Garcia	Pownal, VT
6/26/03	Corban Thomas Miller	Williamstown, MA
6/26/03	Samuel Emmett Prouty	Bennington, VT
6/26/03	Dakota Wade Ward	Manchester, VT
6/27/03	William Eugene Griffis	Arlington, VT
6/28/03	Cale Elijah Gifford	Bennington, VT
6/28/03	Camron Addison Miner	Bennington, VT
6/28/03	Mia Haley VanDeurzen	Williamstown, MA
6/29/03	Emilia Rose LaBombard	Stamford, VT
7/1/03	Allison Marie Woffenden	Hoosick Falls, NY
7/7/03	Rory James Bain	Shushan, NY
7/7/03	Yazmin Mae Baskin	Bennington, VT
7/7/03	Liam Eric Despard	Pownal, VT
7/7/03	Stella Campbell Robson	Bennington, VT
7/9/03	Hoyce Harrison Carter	Granville, NY
7/9/03	Calvin Daniel LaForest	Shaftsbury, VT
7/10/03	Luke William Farrington	Bennington, VT
7/10/03	Becky Marsden Farrington	Bennington, VT
7/10/03	Harley Robert Lanfair	Manchester, VT
7/10/03	Chase Tanner Lord	Stillwater, NY
7/10/03	William Paul Morse	Hoosick Falls, NY
7/11/03	Nickisha Ann Marie Storm Love	Bennington, VT
7/11/03	Emma Rose Treece	Stamford, VT
7/14/03	Cosette Sasha Slattery	Berlin, NY
7/15/03	Ota Isiah Greven	Bennington, VT
7/15/03	Payton Elizabeth Zedalis	Hoosick Falls, NY
7/17/03	Kadin Avery Davis	Bennington, VT
7/17/03	Ta'avah Chesed Simonelli	Cambridge, NY
7/18/03	Marissa Pearl Hansen	Buskirk, NY
7/19/03	Benjamin Lucas Moy	Greenwich, NY
7/19/03	Hannah Blake Samuelson	Arlington, VT
7/20/03	William Matthew Rogers	Bennington, VT
7/21/03	Elizabeth Micelle Allen	Williamstown, MA
7/21/03	Ida Mae Eames	Pownal, VT
7/22/03	Dominic Michael Keath	Cambridge, NY
7/24/03	Bria Whitney Dill	Manchester Ctr, VT
7/24/03	Bailey Walter James Gavin	Bennington VT
7/24/03	Alden Foley Hess	Hoosick, NY
7/24/03	Benjamin Foley Hess	Hoosick, NY
7/26/03	Adrianna Kiah Sacilowski	Bennington, VT
7/26/03	Grace Irene Spiak	Hoosick Falls, NY
7/29/03	Colin Theodore McHale	Wilmington, VT

2003 Births

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name of Child</u>	<u>Residence</u>
7/30/03	Matthew Ryan Squires	Buskirk, NY
7/31/03	Katelyn Leigh Chirasello	Rupert, VT
7/31/03	Aleah Rae Stowell	Hoosick Falls, NY
8/1/03	Tristan Lee Gardner	Bennington, VT
8/1/03	Summer Rose Nichols	Bennington, VT
8/2/03	Audra Grace Marcus	Manchester, VT
8/3/03	Samuel Earle Crockett	Proctor, VT
8/3/03	Graciana Alexis Maier	Sunderland, VT
8/4/03	Fiona Tulip Iseult Bailey	Bennington, VT
8/4/03	Lilly Mae Gates	Buskirk, NY
8/5/03	Noah Benjamin Borden	Shaftsbury, VT
8/5/03	Molly Sven Burnham	Arlington, VT
8/6/03	Ella Skye Colon Masker	Pawlet, VT
8/6/03	Owen Douglas Foyle	Bennington, VT
8/7/03	Nya An Keith	Salem, NY
8/7/03	Brodie James-Monroe Krawczyk	Pownal, VT
8/8/03	Makenzy Crystal Brown	Bennington, VT
8/8/03	Ava May Walsh	East Dorset, VT
8/9/03	Faith Elise Arnold	Hoosick Falls, NY
8/9/03	Karen Sandra Marie Harrington	Hoosick Falls, NY
8/10/03	Makayla Donna Brown	Dover, VT
8/11/03	McKendrick James Bossong	Bennington, VT
8/12/03	Miasha Serenaity Deandra Adams	Bennington, VT
8/13/03	Emma Jane Darrow	Valley Falls, NY
8/13/03	Jayden Lee DeCell	Bennington, VT
8/13/03	Owen Parker Downing	Bennington, VT
8/13/03	Rachael Mai Hunt	Eagle Bridge, NY
8/13/03	Jakob Anthony Ryf	Stillwater, NY
8/14/03	Madelyn Elizabeth Kasulinous	Bennington, VT
8/15/03	Alexis Mackenzie Boyd	Readsboro, VT
8/15/03	Josiah Dexter Durfee	Shaftsbury, VT
8/17/03	Carter Michael Campbell	Bennington, VT
8/18/03	William Levy Beagle II	Salem, NY
8/18/03	Mackenzie Hali Hosley	Arlington, VT
8/18/03	Michael Andrew McCray Jr.	Manchester, VT
8/20/03	Shawna Faith Cooper	Manchester, VT
8/20/03	Abbygail Jean Mattison	Bennington, VT
8/21/03	Taryn Violet Darrell	Dover, VT
8/21/03	Cecelia Michael Dufort	Bennington, VT
8/22/03	Lindsay Schuyler Knight	Manchester, VT
8/23/03	Cameron Heath Durfee	Pownal, VT
8/24/03	Madison Grace Barrett	Salem, NY
8/25/03	Gabriel Aiden Enzensperger	Cambridge, NY
8/25/03	Hans Christian Jerabek	Greenwich, NY
8/25/03	Jair Gomez Martinez	Eagle Bridge, NY
8/25/03	Owen James McCostis	Dorset, VT
8/25/03	Ryleigh Elizabeth Nichols-Cyr	Pownal, VT

2003 Births

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name of Child</u>	<u>Residence</u>
8/26/03	Chloe Jade Cave	Bennington, VT
8/27/03	Ezra Timothy Holland	Readsboro, VT
8/27/03	Kaleb Andrew Matyas	Whitingham, VT
8/27/03	Mackenzie Lee Mentipty	Bennington, VT
8/27/03	Ryan Hunter Sawyer	Bennington, VT
8/27/03	Christopher Tamayo	Petersburgh, NY
8/28/03	Kamryn Mae Parent	Woodford, VT
8/28/03	Olivia Catherine Marie Sheffer	Hoosick Falls, NY
8/29/03	Makenna Marie Cross	Bennington, VT
8/29/03	Molly Ann Walker	White Creek, NY
8/30/03	Sydney Elizabeth Boynton	Bennington, VT
8/30/03	Laura Beth Rosenthal	Sunderland, VT
8/31/03	Thomas Jacob Richard	Hoosick, NY
9/1/03	Andre' Thomas Setter	Stratton, VT
9/2/03	Payton Joseph Lamoureux	Bennington, VT
9/2/03	Aidan Blane Lathrop	Cambridge, NY
9/3/03	Alyssa Lynn Bird	Wilmington, VT
9/3/03	Leah Jean Farland	Bennington, VT
9/3/03	Tristen Mathew Levick	Shaftsbury, VT
9/4/03	Caroline Elizabeth Still	Grafton, NY
9/5/03	Marie Helen Brown	Bennington, VT
9/6/03	Jason Allen Caggiano	Arlington, VT
9/6/03	Elyse Nevaeh Friend	Hoosick Falls, NY
9/6/03	David Jacob Leon Wellspeak	Bennington, VT
9/7/03	Veronica Laura Miron	Bennington, VT
9/8/03	Dustin William Joseph	Manchester, VT
9/9/03	Alexas Lynn Betts	Eagle Bridge, NY
9/9/03	Nicholas Edward Hodgin	Danby, VT
9/9/03	Alexander Stephen Kurucz	Dover, VT
9/11/03	Linsey Paige Krawczyk	Bennington, VT
9/11/03	Jakob Oliver Peckham	Petersburg, NY
9/11/03	Gavin Johnathan Simon	Woodford, VT
9/12/03	Felicity Taniquah Grover	Bennington, VT
9/15/03	Cameron Edward Baker	Granville, NY
9/15/03	Casey Lynn Baker	Granville, NY
9/15/03	Rochelle Clare Daniels	Cambridge, NY
9/15/03	Maria Kathleen Sell	Woodford, VT
9/16/03	Skylar James Dryden	Londonderry, VT
9/16/03	Isabelle Dominique LeRoux	Bennington, VT
9/17/03	Brady Philippe Bissonette	Cambridge, NY
9/17/03	Dominic Mikhail Ferris	Bennington, VT
9/17/03	Ryan Matthew LaPorte	Hoosick Falls, NY
9/17/03	Andrew Michael Ponessi	Shaftsbury, VT
9/18/03	Tristan Anthony Haywood	Manchester, VT
9/18/03	Ruth Elizabeth Nolan	Hoosick Falls, NY
9/19/03	Isaiah Dulson Brunache	Shaftsbury, VT
9/19/03	Haley Elizabeth Gaudette	Bennington, VT

2003 Births

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name of Child</u>	<u>Residence</u>
9/19/03	Andrew Steven Marsden	Bennington, VT
9/19/03	Lilly Marie Peck	Greenwich, NY
9/22/03	Jason Joseph Brown Jr.	Hoosick Falls, NY
9/22/03	Benjamin William Coddington	Bennington, VT
9/22/03	Kodi Michael York	Hoosick Falls, NY
9/23/03	Jacob Scott Terry Morse	Bennington, VT
9/23/03	Xavier Matthew Stager	Hoosick Falls, NY
9/26/03	Selena Elizabeth Harris	Pownal, VT
9/26/03	Samuel Mark Zimpfer	Bennington, VT
9/27/03	Sophia Grace Moxley	Bennington, VT
9/28/03	Richard Frederick Rowe Russell Jr.	Buskirk, NY
9/30/03	Carson Wheeler Beavin	Dorset, VT
9/30/03	Cameron Edward Cummings	Bennington, VT
10/2/03	Emma Gene Dornburgh	Whitingham, VT
10/2/03	Elora Sherrie Brix Repman	Buskirk, NY
10/3/03	Max William Hurley	Shaftsbury, VT
10/3/03	Ian Cole Moffitt	Arlington, VT
10/3/03	Benjamin Scott Ruebel	Hoosick Falls, NY
10/5/03	Noah Edward Denton	Pittsfield, MA
10/6/03	Mitchell Stanley Kupiec Cody	Bennington, VT
10/6/03	Austin Patrick Grogan	Shaftsbury, VT
10/6/03	Maria Naomi Teal	Petersburgh, NY
10/8/03	Dylan Michael Ricard	Salem, NY
10/10/03	Olivia Grace Champine	Dorset, VT
10/10/03	Coral Ann Eriksen	Cambridge, NY
10/10/03	Carleigh Elizabeth Mclean	Bennington, VT
10/12/03	Maison Sloan Elliott	Bennington, VT
10/13/03	Ashlynn Rae Grant	Bennington, VT
10/13/03	Meghan Rose Sherman	Hoosick Falls, NY
10/14/03	Kaleb Mathew Carpenter	Pownal, VT
10/14/03	Carly Emerson Gallivan	Dover, VT
10/14/03	Claire Callistro Holmes	Wardsboro, VT
10/16/03	Maria Katherine Martinez	Bennington, VT
10/17/03	Jackson Stryder Reynolds Bouchett	Bennington, VT
10/17/03	Rhyse Alizabeth Briggs	Sunderland, VT
10/18/03	Ethan David Arnold	Cambridge, NY
10/18/03	Montgomery Ann Crane	Arlington, VT
10/18/03	Taylin Kaylee Zilinskas	Eagle Bridge, NY
10/20/03	William Andrew Palumbo	Wilmington, VT
10/21/03	Connor David Chilson	Salem, NY
10/21/03	Logan Joseph Vars	Cherry Plain, NY
10/23/03	Christian Richard Barcomb	Bennington, VT
10/23/03	Lily Grace Donahue	Naples, FL
10/24/03	Cole Jameson Eldred	Bennington, VT
10/24/03	Lola Hoffenberg	Shaftsbury, VT
10/26/03	Catherine Ann Forbes	Stamford, VT
10/27/03	Logan Michael Morris	Salem, NY

2003 Births

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name of Child</u>	<u>Residence</u>
10/28/03	Dezmond Samual Bolster	Hoosick Falls, NY
10/28/03	Samantha Ann Keys	Salem, NY
10/29/03	Jacob Douglas Backes	Buskirk, NY
10/29/03	Tre'Vaughn Akeem Barboza	Bennington, VT
10/29/03	Kelsie Campney	Woodford, VT
10/29/03	Benjamin William McLaughlin	Bennington, VT
10/29/03	Keanna Marie Pratt	Pownal, VT
10/29/03	Lawrence Joseph Thompson Jr.	Bennington, VT
10/31/03	Bradley James Pleasant	Hoosick Falls, NY
11/2/03	Kailyn Anne Burdick	Bennington, VT
11/2/03	Mollie Kathleen Marie Clark	Bennington, VT
11/2/03	Michael Alfred Scheps II	Manchester, VT
11/2/03	Ryan William Sherman	Pownal, VT
11/4/03	Kasey Dylan Billert	Berlin, NY
11/4/03	Nathan Jeffery Twitchell	Salem, NY
11/5/03	Lucinda Marie Monder	Salem, NY
11/5/03	Samantha Christine Scott	Hoosick Falls, NY
11/7/03	Jordan Mathew Gardner	Shaftsbury, VT
11/7/03	Morgan Jayde Washburn	Bennington, VT
11/8/03	Gwendolyn Elizabeth Clayton	Pownal, VT
11/10/03	Destin Robert Townsend	Bennington, VT
11/10/03	Sylvia Rose Wilkins	Petersburg, NY
11/12/03	Colin Edward Blair	Bennington, VT
11/12/03	Ethan Edward Morse	Bennington, VT
11/13/03	Jordyn Ann Sorel	Hoosick Falls, NY
11/14/03	Eryk Jaymes Hunt	Bennington, VT
11/14/03	Eric Robert Whitman	Shaftsbury, VT
11/16/03	Zoe Camilla Kerns	Pownal, VT
11/16/03	Hannah Evelyn Arden Lane	North Adams, MA
11/17/03	Tristan Beale Hyatt	Dorset, VT
11/17/03	Sierra Michelle Pettibone	Berlin, NY
11/18/03	Brielle Alexandra Tiff	Bennington, VT
11/19/03	Ryan David Rogers	Cambridge, NY
11/19/03	Taylor James Vanaman	Bennington, VT
11/20/03	Kloi Elizabeth Granger	Bennington, VT
11/20/03	Hailey Marie Willette	Arlington, VT
11/22/03	Drew Liam Fitzgibbons	Jamaica, VT
11/23/03	Carly Taylor Boisvert	Cambridge, NY
11/23/03	Alorah Julianne Hoyt	Arlington, VT
11/25/03	Amber Marie Brock	Hoosick Falls, NY
11/25/03	Cayden Arnold Dufresne	Danby, VT
11/25/03	Michaela Aliese Samplatsky	Bennington, VT
11/26/03	Abby Rae Farnum	Bennington, VT
11/26/03	Caroline Marian Pelton	Salem, NY
11/27/03	Unnamed Baby Boy Ranzona	Bennington, VT
11/27/03	Troyha Rose Reynolds	Pownal, VT
11/29/03	Alexis Riley Evans	Hoosick Falls, NY

2003 Births

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name of Child</u>	<u>Residence</u>
11/30/03	Patience Leigh Macomber	Bennington, VT
11/30/03	James Armstrong McEntee	Cambridge, NY
12/1/03	Michael Leon DeMars	Bennington, VT
12/3/03	Carson James Geroux	White Creek, NY
12/4/03	Jaylyn Nicole Prouty	N. Hoosick, NY
12/5/03	Carter Isaiah Wilkins	Cambridge, NY
12/5/03	Isaiah Matthew Zwinge	Bennington, VT
12/6/03	Taryn Grace Coon	Bennington, VT
12/8/03	Rosemary Anne Harmon	Shaftsbury, VT
12/8/03	Kyle Robert Galaske	Whitingham, VT
12/8/03	Ethan James Yonconish	Hoosick, NY
12/9/03	Mackenzie Bree Spangler	Bennington, VT
12/9/03	Trynity Lee Bushee	Bennington, VT
12/9/03	Christopher John Alderman Jr.	Berlin, NY
12/9/03	Julius James Sprague	Bennington, VT
12/10/03	James Karl Martin	Peru, VT
12/11/03	Payton Lynn Santarcangelo	Bennington, VT
12/11/03	Khyler Matthew-Ryan King	Bennington, VT
12/12/03	Lily Ann Comar	Dorset, VT
12/12/03	Amber Ann MacNeil	Hoosick Falls, NY
12/12/03	Jeffery William Pulver	Bennington, VT
12/13/03	Michael James Stockman	Hoosick Falls, NY
12/13/03	Thomas Daryl Peterson Jr.	Readsboro, VT
12/15/03	Jordan Marie Hill	Pownal, VT
12/15/03	Sydney Margaret Coulter	Arlington, VT
12/17/03	Makayla Angela Sousie	Bennington, VT
12/17/03	Alexa Stosh Gerow	Pownal, VT
12/18/03	Hannah Grace Marie Gundrum	Bennington, VT
12/19/03	Charlotte Thayer Fischer	Arlington, VT
12/19/03	Andrew Bret Mastrandrea-Minbirole	Pittstown, NY
12/20/03	Jacob Donn Twigg	Dover, VT
12/20/03	Jonas Adam Tenzer	Bennington, VT
12/21/03	Chaz Michael Thomas	Bennington, VT
12/22/03	Jennifer Elizabeth Coonradt	Shaftsbury, VT
12/24/03	Alex Michael Gillis	Hoosick Falls, NY
12/24/03	Dyani Marie Carpenter	Bennington, VT
12/25/03	Michaela Star Harrington	Shaftsbury, VT
12/26/03	Brenna Marie Hurley	Bennington, VT
12/27/03	Domanick Anthony Vaughn	Valley Falls, NY
12/29/03	Tanner Jacob Crone	Pownal, VT
12/31/03	Mallory Angela Jaime	Manchester, VT

Town Clerk's Report

2003 Dog Licenses Issued

5 @ \$2.00.....	\$ 10.00
942 @ 4.00.....	3,768.00
248 @ 6.00.....	1,488.00
208 @ 8.00.....	1,664.00
48 @ 12.00.....	576.00
3 @ 30.00 (kennel).....	90.00
1 @ 69.00 (kennel).....	69.00
	<u>\$7,665.00</u>

2003 Disbursement

To Town of Bennington.....	<u>\$7,665.00</u>
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2003 Liquor Licenses Issued

32 - 2003 1 st Class Liquor Licenses @ 100.00.....	\$3,200.00
11 - 2003 1 st Class Cabaret Licenses @ 100.00.....	1,100.00
37 - 2003 2 nd Class Liquor Licenses @ 50.00.....	1,850.00
	<u>\$ 6,150.00</u>

2003 Disbursement

To Town of Bennington.....	<u>\$ 6,150.00</u>
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2003 Tobacco Licenses Issued

6 - 2003 Tobacco Licenses @ 5.00.....	<u>\$ 30.00</u>
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2003 Disbursement

To Town of Bennington.....	<u>\$ 30.00</u>
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2003 First Class Liquor Licenses

1. A.J.'s Place ©
2. Alldays & Onions
3. Alldays & Onions
4. American Legion Post 13
5. Apple Valley Inn & Café
6. Bennington Club
7. Bennington College Restaurant & caterers
8. Bennington Lanes
9. Bennington Pizza House
10. Bennington Station
11. Bennington Station ©
12. Thomas J. Carmody's
13. Thomas J. Carmody's ©
14. Dogs Breath Bar & Tap Room
15. Dreaming Tree, Inc.
16. Eagles, Fraternal Order of
17. Elks, Bennington Lodge 567
18. Four Chimney's Restaurant & Inn
19. JC's Tavern ©
20. Jensen's Restaurant Inc.
21. Kevin's at Mike's Place III
22. Kevin's at Mike's Place III ©
23. Lulu's Classic Cuisine
24. Madison Brewing Co., Pub & Restaurant
25. McMorland's
26. McMorland's ©
27. Moose, Loyal Order of Lodge 1233
28. Mt. Anthony Country Club ©
29. Mt. Anthony Golf & Tennis Club
30. New Fortune Cookie
31. New Fortune Cookie ©
32. Pangaea
33. Pizza Hut
34. Ryan's Café ©
35. Sodexho, Vermont, Inc.
36. Sugar Maple Inn
37. Talk of the Town Restaurant
38. Talk of the Town Restaurant ©
39. Trios
40. Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1332
41. Winner's Circle Restaurant Inc.
42. Winner's Circle Restaurant Inc. ©
43. Your Belly's Deli

2003 Second Class Liquor Licenses

1. Aldi
2. Apple Barn
3. Benmont Convenience
4. Bennington Beverage Outlet, BBO
5. Beshara's Discount Beverage & Groceries
6. Brooks Pharmacy
7. Caslin's Grocery
8. Charlie's Mobil & More
9. The Corner Market
10. The Corner Market
11. Cumberland Farms 8006
12. East Road Variety
13. Fleming Oil Company, Inc.
14. Fantastic Gifts
15. Hannaford
16. Henry's Market
17. Madison Brewing Company
18. Maguire's Market
19. Martin's Mini Mart
20. Martin's Mini Mart
21. Martin's Mini Mart & Beverage Discount
22. Mincer's Mini Mart
23. Mobile Dashboard Deli
24. North Bennington Variety
25. Powers Market
26. Powers Market
27. Price Chopper # 171
28. Rite Aid Pharmacy #432
29. Short Stop #145
30. Short Stop #117
31. Smoker's Den & Discount Beverage Center
32. Stewart's Shop #195
33. TPW Enterprises Inc.
34. True's Country Store & Deli
35. Walter Smith, Inc.
36. Willy's Variety
37. Yott's Market, Inc.

TOWN OF BENNINGTON
OFFICE OF THE TREASURER

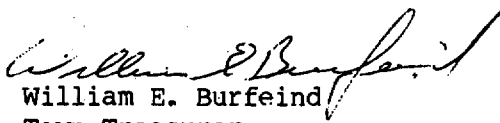
TREASURER'S REPORT FOR THE PERIOD FROM JULY 1, 2002 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2003

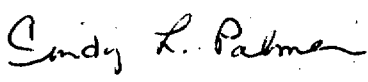
BEGINNING BALANCE - July 1, 2002 (per prior report)	\$ 145,093.30
ADD:	
Town taxes, water/sewer and other receipts	\$10,244,300.62
Fire payment wastewater	500,000.00
BSD, Inc.'s portion of tax collection	10,316,240.00
Interest earned on investments	45,419.53
Tax Anticipation Note due 12/19/02 2.18%	3,000,000.00
Total Receipts	<u>24,105,960.15</u>
Total Available Cash	<u>\$24,251,053.45</u>
SUBTRACT:	
Disbursements made under warrants:	
Payroll	\$ 3,815,640.20
Vendor	6,315,168.45
payment of tax collection to the BSD, Inc.	10,316,240.00
Tax anticipation Note 12/19/02 - principal	3,000,000.00
Chittenden Bank 2.18% - interest	30,519.97
Total Disbursements	<u>23,477,568.62</u>
Cash Balance June 30, 2003	<u>\$ 773,484.83</u>

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR THE PERIOD FROM JULY 1, 2003 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2003

BEGINNING BALANCE - July 1, 2003	\$ 773,484.83
ADD:	
Sollwan & Mary Alexander Sleeman transfer	\$ 6,368.86
Town taxes, water/sewer, and other receipts	8,761,294.97
BSD, Inc. and Benn. Rural Fire tax collection	10,734,549.98
VLCT payments - wastewater fire	1,281,534.68
Interest earned on investments	10,528.86
Line-of-Credit due 12/10/03 1.75%	1,747,846.45
Total Receipts	<u>22,542,123.80</u>
Total Available Cash	<u>\$23,315,608.63</u>
SUBTRACT:	
Disbursements made under warrants:	
12/1 tax collection to BSD, Inc. & Benn. Rural	\$10,734,549.98
Payroll	2,086,232.76
Vendor	5,428,750.16
Line-of-Credit 12/10/03 - principal	1,747,846.45
Chittenden Bank 1.75% - interest	9,795.04
Total Disbursements	<u>20,007,174.39</u>
Cash Balance December 31, 2003	<u>\$3,308,434.24</u>

Respectfully submitted,


William E. Burfeind
Town Treasurer


Cindy L. Palmer
Assistant Town Treasurer

1/05/04

TOWN OF BENNINGTON, VERMONT

Financial Statements and Schedules

June 30, 2003

(With Independent Auditors' Report Thereon)

FISK REED & LOVE
CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS, P.C.

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SECTION I

FINANCIAL SECTION



Independent Auditors' Report

The Select Board
Town of Bennington, Vermont

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of the governmental activities, the business-type activities, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information of Town of Bennington, Vermont as of and for the year ended June 30, 2003, which collectively comprise the Town's basic financial statements as listed in the table of contents. These financial statements are the responsibility of Town of Bennington, Vermont, management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit.

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our opinion.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the respective financial position of the governmental activities, the business-type activities, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information of the Town of Bennington, Vermont, as of June 30, 2003, and the respective changes in financial position and cash flows, where applicable, thereof for the year then ended in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

In accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, we have also issued our report dated December 16, 2003 on our consideration of Town of Bennington, Vermont's internal control over financial reporting and our tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts and grants. That report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* and should be read in conjunction with this report in considering the results of our audit.

As described in Note 3, the Town has implemented a new financial reporting model, as required by the provisions of GASB Statement No. 34, *Basic Financial Statements – and Management's Discussion and Analysis – for State and Local Governments*, as of June 30, 2003.

The management's discussion and analysis, on pages 2 through 10, and budgetary comparison information, on pages 33 through 36, are not a required part of the basic financial statements but are required supplementary information required by accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. We have applied certain limited procedures, which consisted principally of inquiries of management regarding the methods of measurement and presentation of the supplementary information. However, we did not audit the information and express no opinion on it.

December 16, 2003

Fisk Reed & Love, P.C.

Vt. Reg. #357

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www.frlcpa.com

**TOWN OF BENNINGTON, VERMONT
MANAGEMENT'S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS
Year Ended June 30, 2003**

The management's discussion and analysis of the Town of Bennington, Vermont's financial performance is new for this year. It provides an overview of the Town's financial activities for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2003. It focuses on the year end results and provides an objective analysis of the various funds the Town operates in the conduct of its business from a management perspective. It discusses both the government-wide and fund-based financial statements. Please read it in conjunction with the Town's financial statements, which immediately follow this section.

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

- The Town's combined net assets were \$15,793,883 at June 30, 2003.
- During the year, the Town's tax and other revenues exceeded expenses by \$335,877 for governmental programs.
- Expenses of the Town's business-type activities exceeded charges for services by \$332,589.
- In the summer of 2002, the Town's wastewater treatment facility was severely damaged by fire. The total insurance proceeds received through the date of this report exceeded the net book value of the assets destroyed by approximately \$716,000. This gain is reported as an extraordinary item in the Town's Statement of Activities.
- Despite one of the severest winters in recorded history, the Highway Fund completed the year within \$19,000 of budget.

OVERVIEW OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The financial section of this report consists of three parts: Managements' Discussion and Analysis (this section), the basic financial statements, and additional required supplementary information. The basic financial statements include two kinds of statements that present different views of the Town. The Statement of Net Assets and the Statement of Activities provide information about the activities of the Town as a whole and present a longer-term view of the Town's finances. Fund financial statements for governmental activities tell how these services were financed in the short term as well as what remains for future spending. Fund financial statements also report the Town's operations in more detail than the government-wide statements by providing information about the Town's most significant funds. The remaining statements provide financial information about activities for which the Town acts solely as a trustee or agent for the benefit of those outside of the government.

Government-wide Financial Statements

The Statement of Net Assets and the Statement of Activities are also referred to as the *Government-wide* financial statements. These statements report information about the Town and its activities as a whole. These statements include all assets and liabilities using the *accrual basis of accounting*, which is similar to the accounting used by most private-sector companies. All of the current year's revenues and expenses are taken into account regardless of when cash is received or paid.

TOWN OF BENNINGTON, VERMONT
MANAGEMENT'S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS
Year Ended June 30, 2003

These two statements report the Town's *net assets* and changes in them. You can think of the Town's net assets - the difference between assets and liabilities - as one way to measure the Town's financial health, or *financial position*. Over time, *increases or decreases* in the Town's net assets are one indicator of whether its *financial health* is improving or deteriorating. You will need to consider other non-financial factors, however, such as changes in the Town's property tax base and the condition of the Town's roads, to assess the *overall health* of the Town.

The Statement of Net Assets and the Statement of Activities, report two kinds of activities:

- **Governmental activities** - Most of the Town's basic services are reported here, including the police, fire, public works, community development, and recreation departments, and general administration. Property taxes, and state and federal grants finance most of these activities.
- **Business-type activities** - The Town charges a fee to customers to help it cover all or most of the cost of certain services it provides. The Town's water and sewer system and parking facilities are reported here.

Fund Financial Statements

The remaining statements are fund financial statements that focus on individual parts of the Town, reporting the Town's operations in more detail than the Town-wide statements.

- **The Governmental Funds** - Most of the Town's basic services are reported in governmental funds, which focus on how money flows into and out of those funds and the balances left at year-end that are available for spending. These funds are reported using an accounting method called *modified accrual* accounting, which measures cash and all other financial assets that can readily be converted to cash. The governmental fund statements provide a detailed *short-term view* of the Town's general government operations and the basic services it provides. Governmental fund information helps you determine whether there are more or fewer financial resources that can be spent in the near future to finance the Town's programs. The differences between governmental *activities* (reported in the Statement of Net Assets and the Statement of Activities) and governmental *funds* are reconciled in the schedules following each of the governmental fund financial statements.
- **The Proprietary Funds** - When the Town charges customers for the services it provides - whether to outside customers or to other units of the Town - these services are generally reported in Proprietary funds. Proprietary funds are reported in the same way that all activities are reported in the Statement of Net Assets and the Statement of Activities.
- **The Fiduciary Funds** - The Town is the trustee, or fiduciary, for assets that belong to others, such as the Pension Trust Fund. The Town is responsible for ensuring that the assets reported in these funds are used only for their intended purposes and by those to whom the assets belong. The Town excludes these activities from the Town-wide financial statements because it cannot use these assets to finance its operations.

The financial statements also include notes that explain some of the information in the statements and provide more detailed data. The statements are followed by a section of required supplementary information that further explains and supports the financial statements with a comparison of the Town's budget for the year for the General Fund.

TOWN OF BENNINGTON, VERMONT
MANAGEMENT'S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS
Year Ended June 30, 2003

The following table summarizes the major features of the Town's financial statements, including the portion of the Town's activities they cover and the types of information they contain.

Major Features of the Government-Wide and Fund Financial Statements

	Government-Wide Statements	Fund Financial Statements		
		Governmental Funds	Proprietary Funds	Fiduciary Funds
Scope	Entire Town (except fiduciary funds)	The activities of the Town that are not proprietary or fiduciary. Includes general fund and special revenue funds.	The activities of the Town for which a fee is charged to external users (such as water and wastewater treatment activities).	Instances in which the Town administers resources on behalf of someone else, such as retirement programs and trust accounts.
Required financial statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Statement of net assets - Statement of activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Balance sheet - Statement of revenues, expenditures, and changes in fund balances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Statement of net assets or balance sheet - Statement of revenues, expenses and changes in fund net assets - Statement of cash flows 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Statement of fiduciary net assets - Statement of changes in fiduciary net assets
Accounting basis and measurement focus	Accrual basis of accounting and economic resources measurement focus	Modified accrual basis of accounting and current financial resources measurement focus	Accrual basis of accounting and economic resources measurement focus	Accrual basis of accounting and economic resources measurement focus
Type of asset/liability information	All assets and liabilities, both financial and capital, short-term and long-term	Generally, assets expected to be used up and liabilities that come due during the year or soon thereafter; no capital assets or long-term liabilities included	All assets and liabilities, both short-term and long-term; including capital assets	All assets and liabilities, both short-term and long-term; funds do not currently contain capital assets, although they may
Type of inflow/outflow information	All revenues and expenses during year, regardless of when cash is received or paid	Revenues for which cash is received during or soon after the end of the year; expenditures when goods or services have been received and the related liability is due and payable	All additions and deductions during the year, regardless of when cash is received or paid	All additions and deductions during the year, regardless of when cash is received or paid

**TOWN OF BENNINGTON, VERMONT
MANAGEMENT'S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS
Year Ended June 30, 2003**

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS OF THE TOWN AS A WHOLE

This section summarizes information and data as related to the Statements of Net Assets as of June 30, 2003 and the Statement of Activities for the year ended June 30, 2003. In future years, a comparative analysis of government-wide data will be presented.

Government-Wide Statements

The Town's combined net assets increased by approximately \$626 thousand to \$15.8 million at June 30, 2003. Our analysis below focuses on the net assets (Table 1) and changes in net assets (Table 2) of the Town's governmental and business-type activities.

**Table 1
Net Assets
(in Thousands)**

	Governmental Activities	Business-type Activities	Total
Current and other assets	\$ 4,262	1,882	6,144
Capital assets	5,632	8,642	14,274
Total assets	9,894	10,524	20,418
Current liabilities	(645)	(677)	(1,322)
Long-term liabilities	(3,122)	(180)	(3,302)
Total liabilities	(3,767)	(857)	(4,624)
Net assets:			
Invested in capital assets, net of debt	3,086	8,447	11,533
Restricted	1,863	-	1,863
Unrestricted	1,178	1,220	2,398
Total net assets	\$ 6,127	9,667	15,794

The Town's liquidity - the ability to pay for its most immediate obligations - is measured by comparing current assets to current liabilities. The Town has current assets approximately 3.5 times greater than it does current liabilities.

The Town's solvency - the ability to fulfill its total obligations - is measured by comparing debt-to-assets ratio and debt-to-net assets ratio. Debt-to-assets ratio, which equals 23%, computes the percent of assets financed with debt. Debt-to-net assets ratio, which equals 29%, computes the amount that is owed for debt on every dollar that the Town has available for use providing programs.

Based on liabilities of \$4.6 million and total assessed property value of \$720.6 million, the Town's total obligations represent approximately \$0.64 per \$100 of 2002/03 assessed property value. Per capita obligations - the amount of total liabilities per person - is approximately \$289 for the Town, based on total population based on the 2000 Federal Census Report of approximately 16,000.

TOWN OF BENNINGTON, VERMONT
MANAGEMENT'S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS
Year Ended June 30, 2003

The Town's capital assets, such as infrastructure, buildings and equipment, less outstanding debt used to acquire them, amount to \$11.5 million. These assets represent the largest portion of the Town's net assets. Although the Town's investment in its capital assets is reported net of related debt, it should be noted that the resources needed to repay this debt must be provided from other sources, since the capital assets themselves cannot be used to liquidate these liabilities.

Net assets of \$1.9 million have been restricted by the voters or sources external to the Town to be used for specific purposes. The unrestricted net assets of \$2.4 million may be used to meet the Town's ongoing activities.

Table 2
Changes in Net Assets
(In Thousands)

	Governmental Activities	Business-type Activities	Total
Revenues:			
Program revenues:			
Charges for services	\$ 534	2,175	2,709
Grants and contributions	564	-	564
General revenues:			
Property taxes	6,308	-	6,308
Other general revenues	255	67	322
Total revenues	<u>7,661</u>	<u>2,242</u>	<u>9,903</u>
Program expenses:			
General government	1,508	-	1,508
Public safety	2,212	-	2,212
Public works	426	-	426
Community development	206	-	206
Health and welfare	37	-	37
Recreation	741	-	741
Highways and roads	1,865	-	1,865
Library	281	-	281
Interest on long-term debt	149	-	149
Water	-	941	941
Wastewater treatment	-	1,549	1,549
Parking	-	17	17
Total expenses	<u>7,425</u>	<u>2,507</u>	<u>9,932</u>
Excess (deficiency) before extraordinary item and transfers	236	(265)	(29)
Extraordinary item	-	716	716
Transfers	100	(100)	-
Increase in net assets	<u>\$ 336</u>	<u>351</u>	<u>687</u>

**TOWN OF BENNINGTON, VERMONT
MANAGEMENT'S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS
Year Ended June 30, 2003**

Net assets of the Town's governmental activities increased by approximately 6% or \$336 thousand, including operating transfers from business-type activities of \$100 thousand. Unrestricted net assets comprise approximately 20% of the total net assets of governmental activities.

The net assets related to business-type activities increased by approximately \$351 thousand. This increase is largely attributable to an extraordinary gain of \$716 thousand resulting from insurance reimbursements related to the fire at the Town's wastewater treatment facility in August 2002.

**Table 3
Governmental Activities
(in Thousands)**

	<u>Total Cost of Services</u>	<u>Net Cost of Services</u>
General government	\$ 1,508	1,215
Police department	1,899	1,781
Fire department	313	313
Public works	426	279
Community development	206	86
Health and welfare	37	37
Recreation	741	628
Highways and roads	1,865	1,557
Library	281	281
	<u>\$ 7,276</u>	<u>6,177</u>

The costs of providing governmental services amounted to approximately \$7.3 million for the year ended June 30, 2003. The cost of providing services is offset by charges for services and program-specific operating and capital grants, resulting in a net cost of services amounting to approximately \$6.2 million. The net cost of services is funded by property taxes, investment earnings and grants and contributions not restricted to specific programs.

**TOWN OF BENNINGTON, VERMONT
MANAGEMENT'S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS
Year Ended June 30, 2003**

**Table 4
Capital Assets at Year-end
(Net of Depreciation, in Thousands)**

	Governmental Activities	Business-type Activities	Total Primary Government
Land and land improvements	\$ -	170	170
Construction in progress	24	1,064	1,088
Distribution and collection systems	-	1,679	1,679
Buildings and improvements	3,060	5,139	8,199
Equipment and vehicles	2,344	590	2,934
Infrastructure	204	-	204
Totals	\$ 5,632	8,642	14,274

As part of implementing the new financial reporting model, the Town established a new capitalization policy and performed a complete inventory of capital assets. Reconstruction of the sewer treatment facility damaged by fire in 2002 was in process at June 30, 2003. Future major projects include water treatment facility upgrades, capital improvements that will be necessary in order to comply with storm water discharge requirements, and the construction of a new public works garage.

**Table 5
Outstanding Debt, at Year-end
(In Thousands)**

	Governmental Activities	Business-type Activities	Total Primary Government
General obligation bonds	\$ 2,329	195	2,524
Capital lease obligations	217	-	217
Totals	\$ 2,546	195	2,741

The majority of the Town's existing long-term debt was incurred in the construction and renovation of the fire and police facilities. The Town uses capital lease obligations to finance the acquisition of certain vehicles and equipment.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS OF THE TOWN'S FUNDS

This section summarizes the significant changes in the Town's governmental and business-type funds. As noted earlier, the governmental funds account for current activities only. Therefore, this section does not discuss the long-term financial health of the Town's governmental funds. In addition, because the governmental fund statements are presented in basically the same format as in the prior year, the numbers from the prior year audit can be used for comparison purposes.

**TOWN OF BENNINGTON, VERMONT
MANAGEMENT'S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS
Year Ended June 30, 2003**

The overall financial condition of the Town has improved for the second year in a row. The general governmental activities fund reflected a fund balance deficit of \$17,884 at the end of 2001. With the year ended June 30, 2003 closing with a positive fund balance of \$1,684,390, it is apparent that the Town has made some very positive movements to gain financial stability.

A department by department analysis in the General Fund indicates that the Town did very well in managing expenditures throughout all funds. Several exceptions should be noted:

1) Police Department salaries expenditures including overtime continue to be problematic. Short staffing and overtime management continue to lead to over expenditures in the overtime category. In the 2003 fiscal year, this resulted in a \$38,840 deficit in that category. Although some overtime cost is reimbursed through various grants, it still highlights a continuing problem. In the next fiscal year, the Town will be fully staffed (one position frozen for budgetary purposes). We should be in a better position financially. The entire Police Department budget was actually under budget at year end. This was made possible by a savings in pension expense due to the Town's transfer from Mass Mutual to the Vermont Municipal Employees Retirement System (VMERS).

The VMERS transfer saved Town funds throughout the various budgets and is a primary reason for the positive balance at year end. In future years, the new pension agreement calls for a payment against the unfunded liability accrued during the years with Mass Mutual. This payment is estimated at \$265,000 in the 2004 budget.

2) In F.Y. '03, the Town altered its contract for solid waste and recycling services with Casella Waste Management. The budget will appear to show a tremendous difference in the revenue and expenditure sides; however, the net effect is a reduced loss to the Town. In future years, the cost for these services will be significantly reduced for the Town. User fees will be monitored by the Select Board.

As mentioned in the highlights at the beginning of this analysis, the winter of 2002-2003 played havoc with the Highway Fund. Salaries, overtime and supply costs were all overspent. Associated expenses relating to equipment operation and maintenance were also difficult to control. However, savings related to the pension transfer to VMERS and the difficulties of completion of work on the Depot Street enhancement project engineering provided sufficient funds to finish the year with a positive balance.

The Enterprise Funds, especially, the Water and Sewer Funds, continued to show improvement. In the Water Fund, revenues were down due in part to the continuing, mandated switch to meters for all public buildings. This policy, established by the Select Board (Water Board), requires all these buildings to be metered by June 30, 2004. The Town also failed to complete necessary improvements to the Morgan Spring pump station. This prohibited Vermont Pure from purchasing water reducing anticipated revenue by \$25,000. In the future, the agreement with Vermont Pure may generate as much as \$130,000. annually. A grant payment (final) from the project to construct a water storage facility on Burgess Road also was not received. The anticipated grant was \$61,400. A final State determination has reduced the anticipated payment to \$21,490. This should be received in the next fiscal year.

TOWN OF BENNINGTON, VERMONT
MANAGEMENT'S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS
Year Ended June 30, 2003

The water treatment facilities at Bolles Brook (intake) and at the Treatment Plant are in need of major upgrades. The Town is having difficulty meeting new State and Federal regulations relating to turbidity and disinfection byproducts. The upgrade, estimated to cost \$7 million, is at the final design stage and may be placed before the voters in March, 2004. The impact on water rates is estimated to increase the \$180 flat rate to \$260 by 2006 when the project is completed. A positive bond vote is required.

Focusing on the 2003 budget, it is noted that several improvement projects were postponed resulting in a savings. One project, controls at the Filtration Plant, will be combined with the major upgrade, gaining eligibility for low interest loans (net savings \$120,000). The other projects, including system upgrades, were postponed until the 2004 fiscal year (net savings \$100,000).

A review of the Sewer Fund indicates a net operating loss of approximately \$330,000. The principle reason for this is the depreciation applied at \$683,598. The Town suffered the loss of its dewatering and compost facilities in an August 2002 fire. Reconstruction funds, using insurance "income", is shown as an extraordinary item at \$715,873. The Fund is otherwise in very good shape, and met its goals from a budgetary perspective.

Looking to the future, the Town's General Activities Funds (General and Highway) should continue in good stead. The Grand List (the basis for tax rates) is growing at 8% - 12% throughout the community. New construction projects in the commercial sector promise additional growth in the Grand List.

Planned infrastructure improvements in streets, sidewalks, water, and sewer systems, bode well for continued growth in the community.

The Community's debt is relatively small. The proposed \$7 million bond for Water Facility improvements will not have a significant negative impact on the Town's financial health.

BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

TOWN OF BENNINGTON, VERMONT
Statement of Net Assets
June 30, 2003

	Primary Government		
	Governmental Activities	Business-type Activities	Total
Assets:			
Cash	\$ 1,356,544	-	1,356,544
Accounts receivable, net	62,273	1,872,489	1,934,762
Property taxes receivable, net	1,193,580	-	1,193,580
Interest receivable	8,048	-	8,048
Notes receivable, current	102,423	-	102,423
Internal balances	(9,181)	9,181	-
Prepaid expenses	10,327	-	10,327
Notes receivable, non-current	1,538,677	-	1,538,677
Capital assets:			
Land and construction in progress	24,000	1,270,040	1,294,040
Other capital assets, net of accumulated depreciation	5,607,642	7,371,793	12,979,435
Total assets	\$ 9,894,333	10,523,503	20,417,836
Liabilities:			
Accounts payable	\$ 198,648	652,682	851,330
Accrued liabilities	174,786	9,210	183,996
Due to other governments	2,172	-	2,172
Accrued landfill post-closure costs:			
Due within one year	17,718	-	17,718
Due in more than one year	827,918	-	827,918
Bonds payable:			
Due within one year	187,859	15,000	202,859
Due in more than one year	2,140,718	180,000	2,320,718
Lease payable:			
Due within one year	63,770	-	63,770
Due in more than one year	153,472	-	153,472
Total liabilities	3,767,061	856,892	4,623,953
Net assets:			
Invested in capital assets, net of related debt	3,085,823	8,446,833	11,532,656
Restricted for:			
Capital projects	2,359	-	2,359
Community development projects	1,641,100	-	1,641,100
Other purposes	219,416	-	219,416
Unrestricted	1,178,574	1,219,778	2,398,352
Total net assets	6,127,272	9,666,611	15,793,883
Total liabilities and net assets	\$ 9,894,333	10,523,503	20,417,836

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

TOWN OF BENNINGTON, VERMONT
Statement of Activities
Year Ended June 30, 2003

Functions/Programs	Expenses	Program Revenues		Net (Expense) Revenue and Changes in Net Assets		
		Charges for Services	Operating Grants and Contributions	Capital Grants and Contributions	Primary Government	
					Governmental Activities	Business-type Activities
Primary government:						
Governmental activities:						
General government	\$ 1,508,293	157,713	135,358	-	(1,215,222)	-
Public safety:						
Police	1,898,972	96,329	7,271	14,171	(1,781,201)	-
Fire	312,912	-	-	-	(312,912)	-
Public works	426,197	147,753	-	-	(278,444)	-
Community development	205,612	-	119,233	-	(86,379)	-
Health and welfare	37,326	-	-	-	(37,326)	-
Recreation	741,176	113,210	-	-	(627,966)	-
Highways and roads	1,864,458	19,539	-	287,917	(1,557,002)	-
Library	281,430	-	-	-	(281,430)	-
Interest on long-term debt	149,173	-	-	-	(149,173)	-
Total governmental activities	7,425,549	534,544	261,862	302,088	(6,327,055)	-
Business-type activities:						
Water	941,420	1,011,770	-	-	-	70,350
Wastewater treatment	1,549,012	1,154,443	-	-	-	(394,569)
Parking	16,930	8,560	-	-	-	(8,370)
Total business-type activities	2,507,362	2,174,773	-	-	(332,589)	(332,589)
Total primary government	\$ 9,932,911	2,709,317	261,862	302,088	(6,327,055)	(6,659,644)
General revenues:						
Property taxes					6,307,562	-
Grants and contributions not restricted to specific programs					112,592	-
Investment earnings					96,233	1,011
Miscellaneous					46,545	66,526
Extraordinary item					-	715,873
Transfers					100,000	(100,000)
Total general revenues, extraordinary item and transfers					6,662,932	683,410
Change in net assets					335,877	350,821
Net assets - beginning					5,791,395	9,315,790
Net assets - ending					\$ 6,127,272	9,666,611
						15,793,883

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

TOWN OF BENNINGTON, VERMONT
Balance Sheet
Governmental Funds
June 30, 2003

	General Governmental Activities Fund	Special Revenue Funds Community Development Fund	Downtown Improvement Commission	Total Governmental Funds
Assets:				
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 966,554	389,990	-	1,356,544
Delinquent taxes receivable, net of allowance for uncollectible accounts of \$209,655	1,193,580	-	-	1,193,580
Accounts receivable	28,263	-	-	28,263
Interest receivable	-	8,048	-	8,048
Notes receivable, net of allowance for uncollectible accounts of \$85,000	-	1,641,100	-	1,641,100
Due from other funds	93,779	-	11,740	105,519
Due from Federal and state government	34,010	-	-	34,010
Prepaid expense	10,327	-	-	10,327
Total assets	\$ 2,326,513	2,039,138	11,740	4,377,391
Liabilities:				
Accounts payable	\$ 184,093	14,555	-	198,648
Accrued liabilities	160,363	-	-	160,363
Due to other governments	2,172	-	-	2,172
Due to other funds	-	114,700	-	114,700
Deferred revenue	295,495	-	-	295,495
Total liabilities	642,123	129,255	-	771,378
Fund Balances:				
Fund balance:				
Reserved	341,197	-	-	341,197
Reserved for delinquent taxes	1,193,580	-	-	1,193,580
Reserved for notes receivable	-	1,641,100	-	1,641,100
Unreserved	149,613	268,783	11,740	430,136
Total fund balances	1,684,390	1,909,883	11,740	3,606,013
Total liabilities and fund balances	\$ 2,326,513	2,039,138	11,740	4,377,391

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

TOWN OF BENNINGTON, VERMONT
Reconciliation of the Governmental Funds Balance Sheet
to the Statement of Net Assets
June 30, 2003

Total fund balances - governmental funds (from page 13)	\$ 3,606,013
Capital assets used in governmental activities are not financial resources and therefore are not reported in the funds.	5,631,642
Other long-term assets are not available to pay for current-period expenditures and are deferred in the funds.	295,495
Long-term liabilities, including bonds payable, are not due and payable in the current period and therefore are not reported in the funds.	(3,405,878)
Net assets of governmental activities (page 11)	<u>\$ 6,127,272</u>

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

TOWN OF BENNINGTON, VERMONT
Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balances
Governmental Funds
Year Ended June 30, 2003

	General Governmental Activities Fund	Special Revenue Funds Community Development Fund	Downtown Improvement Commission	Total Governmental Funds
Revenues:				
Property taxes	\$ 6,412,898	-	41,670	6,454,568
Permits and licenses	244,687	-	-	244,687
Intergovernmental revenues	543,138	119,233	-	662,371
Fees and charges	179,216	-	-	179,216
Fines and forfeitures	63,861	-	-	63,861
Interest	44,517	51,368	348	96,233
Rental revenue	27,241	-	-	27,241
Gain on sale of assets	10,500	-	-	10,500
Other	68,667	634	106	69,407
Total revenues	7,594,725	171,235	42,124	7,808,084
Expenditures:				
General government	1,202,342	-	-	1,202,342
Public safety	2,057,669	-	-	2,057,669
Public works	426,197	-	-	426,197
Health and welfare	37,326	-	-	37,326
Recreation	715,722	-	-	715,722
Debt management	345,596	-	-	345,596
Highways and roads	2,046,552	-	-	2,046,552
Project expenditures	-	148,721	-	148,721
Other	622,849	-	56,891	679,740
Total expenditures	7,454,253	148,721	56,891	7,659,865
Excess of revenues over expenditures	140,472	22,514	(14,767)	148,219
Other financing sources (uses):				
Operating transfers in (out)	145,000	(45,000)	-	100,000
Excess (deficiency) of revenues and other financing sources over expenditures and other financing uses	285,472	(22,486)	(14,767)	248,219
Fund balance, July 1, 2002	1,398,918	1,932,369	26,507	3,357,794
Fund balance, June 30, 2003	\$ 1,684,390	1,909,883	11,740	3,606,013

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

TOWN OF BENNINGTON, VERMONT
Reconciliation of the Statement of Revenues, Expenditures,
and Changes in Fund Balances of Governmental Funds
to the Statement of Activities
Year Ended June 30, 2003

Net change in fund balances - total governmental funds (from page 15)	\$ 248,219
Revenues in the statement of activities that do not provide current financial resources (property taxes not collected within 60 days of fiscal year end) are not reported as revenues in the funds. This amount represents a decrease in deferred property taxes.	(146,660)
Governmental funds report capital outlays as expenditures. However in the statement of activities, the cost of those assets is allocated over their estimated useful lives as depreciation expense. This is the amount by which depreciation exceeded capital outlays in the current period.	(15,717)
Repayment of principal on long-term obligations is an expenditure in the governmental funds, but the repayment reduces long-term liabilities in the statement of net assets.	250,035
Change in net assets of governmental activities (page 12)	<u>\$ 335,877</u>

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

TOWN OF BENNINGTON, VERMONT

Balance Sheet
 Proprietary Funds
 June 30, 2003

Business-type Activities - Enterprise Funds

	Water Fund	Wastewater Treatment Fund	Parking Meter Fund	Totals
Assets:				
Current assets:				
Accounts receivable, net of allowance for doubtful accounts of \$24,000	\$ 254,556	1,617,933	-	1,872,489
Due from other funds	-	314,614	71,378	385,992
Total current assets	254,556	1,932,547	71,378	2,258,481
Capital assets:				
Land and land improvements	18,000	-	187,458	205,458
Construction in progress	110,890	953,692	-	1,064,582
Distribution and collection systems	1,834,251	627,011	-	2,461,262
Buildings and equipment	1,795,502	14,790,038	26,667	16,612,207
Less accumulated depreciation	(1,852,260)	(9,786,938)	(62,478)	(11,701,676)
Total non-current assets	1,906,383	6,583,803	151,647	8,641,833
Total assets	2,160,939	8,516,350	223,025	10,900,314
Liabilities:				
Current liabilities:				
Accounts payable	98,860	553,822	-	652,682
Accrued liabilities	2,266	6,944	-	9,210
Due to other funds	376,811	-	-	376,811
Bonds payable, current portion	15,000	-	-	15,000
Total current liabilities	492,937	560,766	-	1,053,703
Bonds payable, less current portion	180,000	-	-	180,000
Total liabilities	672,937	560,766	-	1,233,703
Net Assets:				
Invested in capital assets, net of related debt	1,711,383	6,583,803	151,647	8,446,833
Unrestricted - designated	115,497	166,277	-	281,774
Unrestricted - undesignated	(338,878)	1,205,504	71,378	938,004
Total net assets	1,488,002	7,955,584	223,025	9,666,611
Total liabilities and net assets	\$ 2,160,939	8,516,350	223,025	10,900,314

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

TOWN OF BENNINGTON, VERMONT
Statement of Revenues, Expenses, and Changes in Fund Net Assets
Proprietary Funds
Year Ended June 30, 2003

	Business-type Activities - Enterprise Funds			
	Water Fund	Wastewater Treatment Fund	Parking Meter Fund	Totals
Operating revenues:				
Fees and charges for services	\$ 1,011,770	1,154,443	8,560	2,174,773
Other	4,551	61,975	-	66,526
	1,016,321	1,216,418	8,560	2,241,299
Operating expenses:				
Administration	403,382	466,387	-	869,769
Buildings	38,265	-	-	38,265
Equipment	73,359	27,280	-	100,639
Water systems	91,383	-	-	91,383
Filtration plant	117,440	-	-	117,440
Sewer system	-	79,901	-	79,901
Sewer treatment plant	-	289,617	-	289,617
Parking	-	-	5,990	5,990
Depreciation	200,918	683,598	10,940	895,456
Total operating expenses	924,747	1,546,783	16,930	2,488,460
Operating income (loss)	91,574	(330,365)	(8,370)	(247,161)
Nonoperating revenues (expenses):				
Interest income	-	-	1,011	1,011
Interest expense	(16,673)	(2,229)	-	(18,902)
	(16,673)	(2,229)	1,011	(17,891)
Income (loss) before operating transfers and extraordinary item	74,901	(332,594)	(7,359)	(265,052)
Operating transfers out	(50,000)	(50,000)	-	(100,000)
	(50,000)	(50,000)	-	(100,000)
Income (loss) before extraordinary item	24,901	(382,594)	(7,359)	(365,052)
Extraordinary item (casualty gain)	-	715,873	-	715,873
Change in net assets	24,901	333,279	(7,359)	350,821
Total net assets - beginning	1,463,101	7,622,305	230,384	9,315,790
Total net assets - ending	\$ 1,488,002	7,955,584	223,025	9,666,611

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

TOWN OF BENNINGTON, VERMONT

Statement of Cash Flows

Proprietary Funds

Year Ended June 30, 2003

	Business-type Activities - Enterprise Funds			Totals
	Water Fund	Wastewater Treatment Fund	Parking Meter Fund	
Cash flows from operating activities:				
Cash receipts from customers	\$ 972,553	1,119,016	8,560	2,100,129
Other operating cash receipts	4,551	61,975	-	66,526
Cash payments to suppliers of goods or services	(436,388)	(515,373)	(5,990)	(957,751)
Cash payments to employees for services	(213,300)	(291,423)	-	(504,723)
Net cash provided by operating activities	327,416	374,195	2,570	704,181
Cash flows from non-capital financing activities:				
Operating transfers to other funds	(50,000)	(50,000)	-	(100,000)
Advances from (to) other funds	21,751	(469,706)	(3,581)	(451,536)
Interest on short-term borrowings	(5,152)	(2,229)	-	(7,381)
Net cash used in non-capital financing activities	(33,401)	(521,935)	(3,581)	(558,917)
Cash flows from capital and related financing activities:				
Principal payments on bonds	(15,000)	-	-	(15,000)
Purchase of fixed assets	(267,494)	(594,499)	-	(861,993)
Insurance proceeds received	-	742,239	-	742,239
Interest on bonds	(11,521)	-	-	(11,521)
Net cash used in capital and related financing activities	(294,015)	147,740	-	(146,275)
Cash flows from investing activities:				
Interest on cash investments	-	-	1,011	1,011
Net cash provided by investing activities	-	-	1,011	1,011
Net increase in cash	-	-	-	-
Cash, beginning	-	-	-	-
Cash, ending	\$ -	-	-	-
Reconciliation of operating income (loss) to net cash provided by operating activities:				
Operating income (loss)	\$ 91,574	(330,365)	(8,370)	(247,161)
Adjustments to reconcile operating income (loss) to net cash provided by operating activities:				
Depreciation	200,918	683,598	10,940	895,456
Change in assets and liabilities:				
Increase in accounts receivable and other receivables	(39,217)	(35,427)	-	(74,644)
Decrease in accounts payable and accrued liabilities	74,141	56,389	-	130,530
Net cash provided by operating activities	\$ 327,416	374,195	2,570	704,181

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

TOWN OF BENNINGTON, VERMONT
Statement of Fiduciary Net Assets
Fiduciary Funds
June 30, 2003

	Pension Trust Fund
Assets:	
Investments	\$ -
Total assets	\$ -
Liabilities:	
Due to others	\$ -
Total liabilities	\$ -
Net Assets:	
Restricted	-
Total net assets	-
Total liabilities and net assets	\$ -

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

TOWN OF BENNINGTON, VERMONT
Statement of Changes in Fiduciary Net Assets
Fiduciary Funds
Year Ended June 30, 2003

	Pension Trust Fund
<i>Revenues and gains (losses):</i>	
Investment income	\$ 3,492
Depreciation in market value	(149,704)
	<u>(146,212)</u>
<i>Expenditures:</i>	
Benefit payments	200,448
Trustee fees	24,978
	<u>225,426</u>
<i>Excess of revenue over expenditures</i>	(371,638)
<i>Transfer to VMERS</i>	(1,815,738)
<i>Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenditures and other financing uses</i>	(2,187,376)
<i>Total net assets - beginning</i>	2,187,376
<i>Total net assets - ending</i>	\$ -

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

TOWN OF BENNINGTON, VERMONT

Notes to Financial Statements

(1) **Summary of Significant Accounting Policies**

(a) Financial Reporting Entity

The Town of Bennington, Vermont (the "Town") is a unit of local government chartered by the State of Vermont. The Town operates under a Select Board - Manager form of government and provides services as outlined in its charter.

The accompanying financial statements of the Town of Bennington, Vermont include all of the financial activity of the general government, special revenue funds, water department, wastewater treatment department, parking meter fund, and trust funds. All these components are included because they are under the direct control of the Select Board and the Town Manager. The Town exercises significant oversight and financial interdependence exists. The Town is not a component unit of another reporting entity.

The Town applies all relevant Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) pronouncements. Proprietary funds apply Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) pronouncements and Accounting Principles Board (APB) opinions issued on or before November 30, 1989, unless those pronouncements conflict with GASB pronouncements, in which case, GASB prevails.

(b) Basis of Presentation

Government-wide Statements

The Statement of Net Assets and the Statement of Activities present financial information about the Town's governmental and business-type activities. These statements include the financial activities of the overall government in its entirety, except those that are fiduciary. Eliminations have been made to minimize the effect of internal transactions between funds. Governmental activities generally are financed through taxes, State aid, intergovernmental revenues, and other exchange and nonexchange transactions. Operating grants include operating-specific and discretionary (either operating or capital) grants, while the capital grants column reflects capital-specific grants.

The Statement of Activities presents a comparison between direct expenses and program revenues for each function of the Town's governmental and business-type activities. Direct expenses are those that are specifically associated with and are clearly identifiable to a particular function. Program revenues include charges paid by the recipients of goods or services offered by the programs, and grants and contributions that are restricted to meeting the operational or capital requirements of a particular program. Revenues that are not classified as program revenues, including all taxes, are presented as general revenues.

Fund Financial Statements

The fund statements provide information about the Town's funds, including fiduciary funds. Separate statements for each fund category (governmental, proprietary and fiduciary) are presented. The emphasis of fund financial statements is on major funds, each displayed in a separate column. All remaining funds are aggregated and reported as non-major funds, however since the Town has only one non-major fund in each fund type, they are reported in individual columns.

The financial activities of the Town that are reported in the accompanying financial statements have been classified in the major funds listed below. In addition, a description of the fiduciary funds is listed below.

(continued)

TOWN OF BENNINGTON, VERMONT

Notes to Financial Statements

(1) *Summary of Significant Accounting Policies (continued)*

(b) *Basis of Presentation (continued)*

Governmental Funds

General Governmental Activities Fund - The General Governmental Activities Fund is used to account for all revenues and expenditures applicable to the general operations of the governmental agencies of the Town. All general operating revenues which are not restricted as to use by sources external to the Town are recorded in the General Governmental Activities Fund.

Special Revenue Funds - The Special Revenue Funds are operating funds for which the use of revenues is restricted, generally by Federal and state governments. The Town uses two Special Revenue Funds: the Community Development Fund and the Downtown Improvement Commission.

Enterprise Funds - Enterprise Funds are used to account for operations that are financed and operated in a manner similar to private business enterprises - where the intent of the governing body is that the costs (expenses, including depreciation) of providing goods and services to the general public on a continuing basis be financed or recovered primarily through user charges. The Town uses three Enterprise Funds: the Water Fund, Wastewater Treatment Fund, and Parking Meter Fund.

Fiduciary Funds

Pension Trust Fund - The Pension Trust Fund is used to account for funds held in trust to provide retirement benefits to eligible employees. It is accounted for in essentially the same manner as proprietary funds. The Pension Trust Fund's fiscal year ends on September 30. The amounts included in the Town's financial statements are as of and for the year ended September 30, 2002. During the year ended June 30, 2003 the Town transferred all assets of the Pension Trust Fund to the Vermont Municipal Employees Retirement System (VMERS), effectively closing out the pension trust fund. VMERS is a cost-sharing multiple-employer pension plan.

(c) *Measurement Focus and Basis of Accounting*

The Town-wide, proprietary and fiduciary fund financial statements are reported using the economic resources measurement focus and the accrual basis of accounting. Revenues are recorded when earned and expenses are recorded at the time liabilities are incurred, regardless of when the related cash transaction takes place. Nonexchange transactions, in which the Town gives or receives value without directly receiving or giving equal value in exchange, include property taxes, grants and donations. On an accrual basis, revenue from property taxes is recognized in the fiscal year for which the taxes are levied. Revenue from grants and donations is recognized in the fiscal year in which all eligibility requirements have been satisfied.

The governmental fund statements are reported using the current financial resources measurement focus and the modified accrual basis of accounting. Under this method, revenues are recognized when measurable and available. The Town considers all revenues other than property taxes reported in the governmental funds to be available if the revenues are collected within one year after the end of the fiscal year. Property taxes are recognized to the extent collected within sixty days of fiscal year end.

(continued)

TOWN OF BENNINGTON, VERMONT

Notes to Financial Statements

(1) **Summary of Significant Accounting Policies (continued)**

(c) **Measurement Focus and Basis of Accounting (continued)**

Expenditures are recorded when the related fund liability is incurred, except for principal and interest on general long-term debt, claims and judgments, and compensated absences, which are recognized as expenditures to the extent they have matured. General capital asset acquisitions are reported as expenditures in governmental funds. Proceeds of general long-term debt and acquisitions under capital leases are reported as other financing sources.

(d) **Budgets and Budgetary Accounting**

The Town uses the following procedures in establishing the budgetary data for the General Governmental Activities Fund reflected in the financial statements:

1. The Town Manager prepares the annual operating budget for the General Governmental Activities Fund for the Town's fiscal year ended June 30th prior to the preceding March. The Town Manager prepares the budget through consultation with the Town's department supervisors. The operating budget includes proposed expenditures and the means of financing them. The Town Manager submits the budget to the Select Board for approval.
2. After the budget is approved, the Select Board publishes a warning in the Town newspaper for a special Town meeting to discuss the budget.
3. Prior to July 1 of the new fiscal year, the annual Town meeting is held and the budget is legally enacted by a general Town vote.
4. Budget revisions must be approved by the Select Board. Appropriations lapse at the end of the Town's fiscal year if not encumbered.
5. Formal budgetary integration is employed as a management control device during the year for the General Governmental Activities Fund.
6. The budget for the General Governmental Activities Fund is adopted on the modified accrual basis. The budgeted amounts are as originally adopted.

(e) **Interfund Balances and Transfers**

Interfund balances arise primarily as a result of the Town's pooling of cash deposits. Interfund transfers represent administrative charges paid by the enterprise funds and community development fund to the general governmental activities fund.

(f) **Capital Assets**

Property and equipment is stated at known or estimated historical cost. Net interest costs are capitalized on projects during the construction period. Depreciation is computed using the straight-line method over estimated useful lives as follows: office furniture and equipment – 5 to 10 years, motor vehicles and heavy equipment – 5 to 15 years, buildings and building improvements – 20 to 40 years, and infrastructure – 25 to 40 years. When assets are retired or otherwise disposed of, the cost and related accumulated depreciation are removed from the accounts, and any resulting gain or loss is reflected in income for the period. The cost of maintenance and repairs is charged to income as incurred; significant renewals and betterments are capitalized. Deduction is made for retirements resulting from renewals or betterments.

(continued)

TOWN OF BENNINGTON, VERMONT

Notes to Financial Statements

(1) *Summary of Significant Accounting Policies (continued)*

(g) *Retirement Plan*

The Town funds accrued pension cost of its non-contributory defined-benefit pension plan covering substantially all Town employees who have completed two years of service.

(h) *Cash and Cash Equivalents*

For purposes of the statement of cash flows presented for the proprietary funds, cash equivalents include all short-term highly liquid investments which are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and have original maturities of three months or less.

(i) *Long-term Debt and Deferred Charges*

In the government-wide financial statements long-term debt and other long-term obligations are reported as liabilities in the applicable statement of assets. Bond premiums and discounts, as well as issuance costs, are deferred and amortized over the life of the bonds using the straight-line method which approximates the effective interest method. Bonds payable are reported net of the applicable bond premium or discount. Bond issuance costs are reported as deferred charges and amortized over the term of the related debt.

In the fund financial statements, governmental fund types recognize bond premiums and discounts, as well as bond issuance costs, during the current period. The face amount of debt issued is reported as other financial sources. Premiums received on debt issuances are reported as other financial sources while discounts on debt issuances are reported as other financing uses. Issuance costs, whether or not withheld from the actual debt proceeds received, are reported as debt service expenditures. Accumulated unpaid vacation pay and compensatory leave is accrued when incurred in proprietary funds (using the accrual basis of accounting). The current portion of accumulated unpaid vacation pay and compensatory leave is accrued when incurred in governmental funds (using the modified accrual basis of accounting). Accumulated unpaid sick pay is paid to Town employees only while employed and is not recorded as the ultimate liability is not subject to reasonable estimation.

(j) *Net Assets/Governmental Fund Balance*

In the government-wide financial statements, net assets are classified in the following categories:

Invested in Capital Assets, Net of Related Debt – This category groups all capital assets into one component of net assets. Accumulated depreciation and the outstanding balances of debt that are attributable to the acquisition, construction or improvement of these assets reduce this category.

Restricted Net Assets – This category presents external restrictions imposed by creditors, grantors, contributors or laws or regulations of other governments and restrictions imposed by law through constitutional provisions or enabling legislation.

Unrestricted Net Assets – This category includes both designated and undesignated net assets of the District. Designated net assets include reserves that were established by the Board, which are considered internally designated. Undesignated net assets are not restricted for any project or other purpose.

(continued)

TOWN OF BENNINGTON, VERMONT

Notes to Financial Statements

(1) Summary of Significant Accounting Policies (continued)

(j) Net Assets/Governmental Fund Balance (continued)

In the fund financial statements, reserves and designations segregate portions of fund balance that are either not available or have been earmarked for specific purposes. While a separate bank account is not necessary for each reserve fund, a separate identity for each reserve fund is maintained.

(k) Encumbrance Accounting

Encumbrances outstanding at year-end are recorded as a reservation of fund balance in the Town's governmental funds, since they do not constitute expenditures or liabilities.

(l) Use of Accounting Estimates

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the reporting period. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

(2) Explanation of Certain Differences Between Governmental Fund Statements and the Government-wide Statements

Due to the differences in the measurement focus and basis of accounting used in the governmental fund statements and the government-wide statements, certain financial transactions are treated differently. The basic financial statements contain a full reconciliation of these items. The differences result primarily from the economic focus of the Statement of Activities, compared with the current financial resources focus of the governmental funds.

Total Fund Balances of Governmental Funds vs. Net Assets of Governmental Activities

Total fund balances of the District's governmental funds differs from "net assets" of governmental activities reported in the Statement of Net Assets. This difference primarily results from the additional long-term economic focus of the Statement of Net Assets versus the solely current financial resources focus of the governmental fund Balance Sheets.

Statement of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balance vs. Statement of Activities

Differences between the governmental funds Statement of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balance and the Statement of Activities fall into one of the categories listed below.

1. Long-Term Revenue and Expense Differences - Long-term revenue differences arise because governmental funds report revenues only when they are considered "available", whereas the Statement of Activities reports revenues when earned. Differences in long-term expenses arise because governmental funds report on a modified accrual basis, whereas the accrual basis of accounting is used on the Statement of Activities.
2. Long-Term Debt Transaction Differences - Long-term debt transaction differences occur because both interest and principal payments are recorded as expenditures in the governmental fund statements, whereas interest payments are recorded in the Statement of Activities as incurred, and principal payments are recorded as a reduction of liabilities in the Statement of Net Assets.

(continued)

TOWN OF BENNINGTON, VERMONT

Notes to Financial Statements

(2) *Explanation of Certain Differences Between Governmental Fund Statements and the Government-wide Statements (continued)*

3. Capital Assets - Capital related differences include the difference between proceeds for the sale of capital assets reported on governmental fund statements and the gain or loss on the sale of assets as reported on the Statement of Activities, and the difference between recording an expenditure for the purchase of capital items in the governmental fund statements and depreciation expense on those items as recorded in the Statement of Activities.

(3) *Change in Accounting Principle*

For the year ended June 30, 2003, the Town implemented GASB Statement 34, "Basic Financial Statements and Management's Discussion and Analysis for State and Local Governments". GASB 34 creates a new set of basic financial statements, and requires the Town to include Government-wide financial statements that are prepared on an accrual basis of accounting using the economic resources measurement focus. The previous requirement for fund financial statements is modified to present information for individual major funds rather than by fund type. Non-major funds are presented as a total in one column.

Other GASB Statements are required to be implemented in conjunction with GASB Statement 34. Therefore, the Town has implemented, to the extent applicable, the following GASB Statements in the current fiscal year: Statement 33, *Accounting and Financials Reporting for Nonexchange Transactions*; Statement 36, *Recipient Reporting for Certain Shared Nonexchange Revenues*; Statement 37, *Basic Financial Statements - Management's Discussion and Analysis for State and Local Governments*; and, Statement 38, *Certain Financial Statement Note Disclosures*.

As a result of implementing these pronouncements for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2003, the following restatement was made to June 30, 2002 net assets balances:

Total fund balances at June 30, 2002 for all governmental funds \$ 3,357,794

Amounts not included in the Balance Sheet - Governmental Funds,
but included in the government-wide Statement of Net Assets
at June 30, 2002:

Capital assets, net of accumulated depreciation	5,647,359
Other long-term assets	442,145
Long-term liabilities:	
Bonds payable	(2,525,000)
Accrued landfill post-closure costs	(862,500)
Compensated absences	(15,922)
Capital lease obligation	(252,481)
Total net assets, as restated	<u>\$ 5,791,395</u>

TOWN OF BENNINGTON, VERMONT

Notes to Financial Statements

(4) Cash

At June 30, 2003 the carrying amount of the Town's cash was \$1,356,544 and the bank balance was \$1,367,650. Of the bank balance, \$262,521 was covered by Federal depository insurance and \$1,105,129 was collateralized with securities held in the Town's name.

Certain cash balances are restricted for amounts reserved or designated, as follows:

General Governmental Activities Fund:

Capital facilities	\$ 823
Cherry trees	3,018
Community Built Park	17,783
Fire department donations	2,000
Fire equipment	79,422
Information signs	6,420
Parking improvements	40,000
Police LLEBG	40,175
Reappraisal	80,140
Recreation Center fence	1,536
Seizure and forfeiture	24,179
Senior Center van	622
Sleeman - Recreation Center	41,655
Teen night	3,424
	<u>\$ 341,197</u>

Enterprise Funds:

Water Fund:

Improvements and equipment	\$ 115,497
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Wastewater Treatment Fund:

Machinery and equipment	\$ <u>166,277</u>
	<u>\$ 281,774</u>

(5) Investments

The Town is not restricted by state statute as to the type of investments that it is authorized to hold. The Town invested primarily in collateralized and insured certificates of deposit during the fiscal year ended June 30, 2003.

During the fiscal year ended June 30, 2003 the Town transferred the investments of the Pension Trust Fund into the Vermont Municipal Employees Retirement System.

TOWN OF BENNINGTON, VERMONT

Notes to Financial Statements

(6) Capital Assets

Capital asset activity for the year was as follows:

	Beginning Balance	Additions	Retirements	Ending Balance
Governmental activities:				
Buildings and improvements	\$ 6,344,701	29,600	-	6,374,301
Equipment and vehicles	3,555,469	157,020	-	3,712,489
Infrastructure	-	207,186	-	207,186
Construction in progress	-	24,000	-	24,000
Totals at historical cost	9,900,170	417,806	-	10,317,976
Less accumulated depreciation for:				
Buildings and improvements	(3,199,803)	(114,672)	-	(3,314,475)
Equipment and vehicles	(1,053,008)	(315,398)	-	(1,368,406)
Infrastructure	-	(3,453)	-	(3,453)
Totals accumulated depreciation	(4,252,811)	(433,523)	-	(4,686,334)
Governmental activities capital assets, net	\$ 5,647,359	(15,717)	-	5,631,642
Business-type activities:				
Land and land improvements	\$ 205,458	-	-	205,458
Construction in progress	-	1,064,582	-	1,064,582
Distribution and collection systems	2,327,810	133,452	-	2,461,262
Buildings and improvements	16,738,954	59,475	(2,379,760)	14,418,669
Equipment and vehicles	2,088,372	105,165	-	2,193,537
Totals at historical cost	21,360,594	1,362,674	(2,379,760)	20,343,508
Less accumulated depreciation for:				
Land and land improvements	(25,675)	(10,338)	-	(36,013)
Distribution and collection systems	(642,930)	(139,500)	-	(782,430)
Buildings and improvements	(9,734,396)	(583,530)	1,038,395	(9,279,531)
Equipment and vehicles	(1,441,613)	(162,088)	-	(1,603,701)
Totals accumulated depreciation	(11,844,614)	(895,456)	1,038,395	(11,701,675)
Business-type activities capital assets, net	\$ 9,515,980	467,218	(1,341,365)	8,641,833

Depreciation expense was charged to governmental functions as follows:

General government	\$ 40,794
Public safety:	
Police	85,612
Fire	136,923
Recreation	33,202
Highway and roads	136,992
	<u>\$ 433,523</u>

TOWN OF BENNINGTON, VERMONT

Notes to Financial Statements

(7) Notes Receivable – Special Revenue Funds

Notes receivable - Special Revenue Funds consist of loans to individuals and businesses under the Community Development Program of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. Such notes are interest bearing at various interest rates between 4 and 8%, generally require monthly payments over terms ranging from five to fifteen years, and are secured by security interests in personal property or real estate mortgages.

The Community Development Fund's fund balance has been reserved in the amount of \$1,641,100. The fund balance has been reserved in an amount equal to the Community Development Fund's net notes receivable to denote that it is not available to finance the general operations of the fund.

(8) Bonds Payable and Schedule of Five-Year Maturities

Long-term liability activity for the year ended June 30, 2003 was as follows:

	Beginning Balance	Additions	Reductions	Ending Balance	Amounts Due within One Year
Governmental Activities					
Bonds payable	\$ 2,525,000	-	(196,423)	2,328,577	187,859
Capital lease obligations	252,481	59,890	(95,129)	217,242	76,480
Total bonds and capital lease obligations	2,777,481	59,890	(291,552)	2,545,819	264,339
Other liabilities:					
Compensated absences	15,922	-	(1,499)	14,423	-
Total other liabilities	15,922	-	(1,499)	14,423	-
Governmental activities long-term liabilities	\$ 2,793,403	59,890	(293,051)	2,560,242	264,339
Business-type Activities					
Bonds payable	\$ 210,000	-	(15,000)	195,000	15,000
Business-type activities long-term liabilities	\$ 210,000	-	(15,000)	195,000	15,000

Maturities of long-term debt for each of the five years following June 30, 2003 are as follows:

	Year ending June 30,				
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Library construction bonds	\$ 17,859	17,859	12,859	-	-
Police building bond #2	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000
Fire truck bond	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000
Fire building bond	90,000	90,000	90,000	90,000	90,000
Police building bond	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000
Water Fund:					
Burgess Road extension	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000
	\$ 202,859	202,859	197,859	185,000	185,000

All bonds payable are secured by the general revenue raising powers of the Town.

TOWN OF BENNINGTON, VERMONT

Notes to Financial Statements

(9) Property Taxes

Property taxes attach as an enforceable lien on property as of April 1st. Property taxes for fiscal year 2003 were levied September 13, 2002 and were payable November 12, 2002.

(10) Deferred Compensation Plan and Pensions

Defined Benefit Plan

During the year ended June 30, 2003, all assets of the Town's defined benefit pension plan were transferred to Vermont Municipal Employees Retirement System (VMERS), a cost-sharing multiple-employer defined benefit pension plan administered by the State of Vermont.

VMERS provides retirement and disability benefits, annual cost-of-living adjustments, and death benefits to plan members and beneficiaries. The Retirement System Division of the Vermont State Treasurer's Office issues a publicly available financial report that includes financial statements and required supplementary information for VMERS. That report may be obtained by writing to Retirement System Division, Vermont State Treasurer's Office, 133 State Street, Montpelier, Vermont 05602.

Plan members are required to contribute 9% of their annual covered compensation and the Town is required to contribute at an actuarially determined rate. The current rate is 6% of annual covered payroll. The contribution requirements of plan members and the Town of Bennington are established and may be amended by the Retirement Board, Vermont Municipal Employees Retirement System. There were no contributions made to VMERS by the Town for the year ended June 30, 2003.

Deferred Compensation Plan

The Town offers its employees a deferred compensation plan created in accordance with Internal Revenue Code Section 457. The plan permits them to defer a portion of their salary until future years. The deferred compensation is not available to employees until termination, retirement, death, or unforeseeable emergency.

(11) Leases

The Town leases certain equipment under agreements which are classified as capital leases. At June 30, 2003, equipment recorded under capital lease in the Town-wide financial statements amounted to \$444,670.

Future minimum payments required under capital leases are as follows:

Year ending June 30:	
2004	76,480
2005	70,833
2006	38,613
2007	38,613
2008	25,573
Total minimum lease payments	250,112
Less amount representing interest	(32,870)
Present value of minimum lease payments	<u>\$ 217,242</u>

TOWN OF BENNINGTON, VERMONT

Notes to Financial Statements

(12) Risk Management

The Town is exposed to various risks of loss related to general liability, property and casualty, workers' compensation, employee health and accident and environmental liability. The Town purchases commercial insurance coverage for the risks of losses to which it is exposed, exclusive of environmental liabilities which are not covered due to the excessive cost of coverage.

(13) Commitments

Solid Waste Disposal

The Bennington Transfer Station is operated under a contract with a waste management company. The Town agreed, as a condition of the contract to indemnify such company from all liability, loss, cost or expense incurred in connection with the operation of the transfer station or other handling of Bennington waste. The contract also indemnifies the Town in the event that liabilities are incurred for which the company is responsible.

(14) Contingencies

(a) Litigation-General

The Town is party to various legal actions which normally occur in governmental operations. The amounts of any settlements under these actions are expected to be within the limits of the Town's insurance coverage and are not likely to have a material adverse effect on the affected funds of the Town.

(b) Landfill Post-Closure Costs

In accordance with Governmental Accounting Standards Board Statement No. 18, the Town has recorded a liability for the present value of estimated post-closure repair, maintenance and monitoring costs in the statement of net assets amounted to \$845,636

The Town's post-closure costs for the year ended June 30, 2003 amounted to \$24,756.

(c) Federal and State Grants

In the normal course of operations, the Town receives grant funds from various Federal and State agencies. The grant programs are subject to audit by agents of the granting authorities, the purpose of which is to ensure compliance with conditions precedent to the granting of funds. Any liability for reimbursement which may arise as the result of such audits is not believed to be material.

(15) Subsequent Events

On July 1, 2003 the Town borrowed \$2,000,000 in anticipation of property tax collections. The note was due and paid on December 10, 2003 with an interest rate of 1.75%.

The Town borrowed and repaid \$3,000,000 in anticipation of property taxes during the fiscal year ended June 30, 2003.

(16) Extraordinary Item

In August 2002, the Town's wastewater treatment facility was severely damaged by fire. Insurance proceeds received and receivable related to the fire exceed the estimated net book value of the portions of the facility destroyed by \$715,873. This amount is reported as an extraordinary item in the accompanying financial statements. Accounts receivable in the Wastewater Treatment Fund includes \$1,315,000 of insurance proceeds received subsequent to June 30, 2003.

TOWN OF BENNINGTON, VERMONT
Schedule of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balance -
Budget and Actual - General Governmental Activities Fund
Year Ended June 30, 2003

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Variance Favorable (Unfavorable)</u>
Revenues:			
Property taxes:			
General	\$ 4,417,690	4,373,671	(44,019)
Highway	1,832,540	1,832,540	-
Penalties and interest	-	206,687	206,687
	<u>6,250,230</u>	<u>6,412,898</u>	<u>162,668</u>
Permits and licenses:			
Alcoholic beverages	6,460	6,170	(290)
Dog licenses	7,500	7,857	357
Building and zoning permits	76,000	87,307	11,307
Landfill	615,280	143,353	(471,927)
	<u>705,240</u>	<u>244,687</u>	<u>(460,553)</u>
Intergovernmental revenues:			
State shared interests:			
Federal and State Grant	-	66,844	66,844
Highway	303,000	295,188	(7,812)
In lieu of taxes	80,000	112,592	32,592
Other	89,130	68,514	(20,616)
	<u>472,130</u>	<u>543,138</u>	<u>71,008</u>
Fees and charges:			
Police sales and services	32,000	32,341	341
Police insurance report fees	400	127	(273)
Sale of cemetery lots	2,000	4,400	2,400
Animal control fees	-	878	878
Recreational center charges	50,000	36,127	(13,873)
Pool membership fees	82,500	77,083	(5,417)
Senior citizens	27,900	28,260	360
	<u>194,800</u>	<u>179,216</u>	<u>(15,584)</u>
Fines and forfeitures:			
Police fines, seizures and forfeitures	55,000	63,861	8,861
Interest	<u>30,000</u>	<u>44,517</u>	<u>14,517</u>
Gain on sale of assets	<u>10,000</u>	<u>10,500</u>	<u>500</u>
Rental revenue	<u>27,700</u>	<u>27,241</u>	<u>(459)</u>
Other	<u>84,100</u>	<u>68,667</u>	<u>(15,433)</u>
Total revenues	<u>7,829,200</u>	<u>7,594,725</u>	<u>(234,475)</u>

(continued)

TOWN OF BENNINGTON, VERMONT
Schedule of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balance -
Budget and Actual - General Governmental Activities Fund (Continued)
Year Ended June 30, 2003

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Variance Favorable (Unfavorable)</u>
Expenditures:			
General Government:			
Selectors	\$ 14,450	13,485	965
Town Manager	154,850	148,021	6,829
Elections	24,900	22,529	2,371
Treasurer	21,290	21,381	(91)
Accounting	140,150	139,772	378
Listing	110,150	98,063	12,087
Tax collecting	63,620	56,652	6,968
Town Clerk	54,300	47,435	6,865
Planning and zoning	228,860	233,876	(5,016)
Economic and community development	115,550	100,768	14,782
Plant and equipment:			
Administration	170,130	174,350	(4,220)
Buildings and grounds	146,510	146,010	500
	<u>316,640</u>	<u>320,360</u>	<u>(3,720)</u>
	<u>1,244,760</u>	<u>1,202,342</u>	<u>42,418</u>
Public safety:			
Police:			
Administration	1,688,370	1,660,525	27,845
Investigation	9,800	8,081	1,719
Training	8,050	5,592	2,458
Communications	14,380	14,435	(55)
Police building	45,280	55,754	(10,474)
Equipment	81,800	98,280	(16,480)
Special services	34,480	25,740	8,740
	<u>1,882,160</u>	<u>1,868,407</u>	<u>13,753</u>
Fire:			
Administration	42,910	43,969	(1,059)
Fire fighting	13,580	8,279	5,301
Communications	7,860	8,268	(408)
Machinery and equipment	95,340	87,334	8,006
Buildings	34,100	41,412	(7,312)
	<u>193,790</u>	<u>189,262</u>	<u>4,528</u>
	<u>2,075,950</u>	<u>2,057,669</u>	<u>18,281</u>

(continued)

TOWN OF BENNINGTON, VERMONT
Schedule of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balance -
Budget and Actual - General Governmental Activities Fund (Continued)
Year Ended June 30, 2003

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Variance Favorable (Unfavorable)</u>
Expenditures (continued):			
Public works:			
Solid waste management	\$ 615,280	259,230	356,050
Street lights	135,000	133,979	1,021
Cemetery and mini-park	26,090	32,988	(6,898)
	<u>776,370</u>	<u>426,197</u>	<u>350,173</u>
Health and welfare:			
Health officer	5,780	5,375	405
Bennington Home Health	24,000	24,000	-
Animal control	8,180	7,951	229
	<u>37,960</u>	<u>37,326</u>	<u>634</u>
Recreation:			
Supervision	348,240	330,096	18,144
Recreation Center	12,270	10,944	1,326
Indoor pool	15,210	13,977	1,233
Parks	65,390	68,096	(2,706)
Pathway	3,420	33,259	(29,839)
Buildings	86,670	87,598	(928)
Vehicles and equipment	10,680	11,437	(757)
Senior Citizens' Center	152,550	117,531	35,019
Senior Citizens' - building	48,510	42,784	5,726
	<u>742,940</u>	<u>715,722</u>	<u>27,218</u>
Debt management:			
Principal	190,000	190,000	-
Interest - bonds	133,880	132,457	1,423
Interest - tax anticipation note	138,000	23,139	114,861
	<u>461,880</u>	<u>345,596</u>	<u>116,284</u>
Highways and roads:			
Administration and buildings	880,670	925,074	(44,404)
Construction and maintenance - town highways	521,920	558,386	(36,466)
Installing and maintaining traffic control devices	76,500	37,453	39,047
Buildings	23,050	28,687	(5,637)
Sidewalks	75,720	82,068	(6,348)
Bridges	22,000	48,114	(26,114)
Downtown	200,620	31,960	168,660
Vehicles and equipment	227,160	334,810	(107,650)
	<u>2,027,640</u>	<u>2,046,552</u>	<u>(18,912)</u>

(continued)

TOWN OF BENNINGTON, VERMONT
Schedule of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balance -
Budget and Actual - General Governmental Activities Fund (Continued)
Year Ended June 30, 2003

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Variance Favorable (Unfavorable)</u>
Expenditures (continued):			
Other:			
Bennington County Regional Commission	\$ 12,120	12,120	-
Bennington Project Independence	10,600	10,600	-
Bennington Tutorial Center	8,000	8,000	-
Bennington-Rutland Opportunity Council	7,800	7,800	-
CERCLA	43,350	24,756	18,594
Center for Restorative Justice	1,500	1,500	-
Conservation of natural resources - tree program	7,000	8,485	(1,485)
County taxes	65,000	65,098	(98)
Flood control program	8,000	6,898	1,102
Holiday celebrations	23,400	26,633	(3,233)
Library administration	281,430	281,430	-
Miscellaneous contingencies	87,000	147	86,853
North Bennington - recreation	3,700	3,700	-
Poor relief - burials	4,000	2,954	1,046
Project Against Violent Encounters	3,000	3,000	-
Retired Seniors Volunteer Program	8,000	8,000	-
Reserve fund expenditures	-	138,928	(138,928)
Vermont Council on Aging	11,000	11,000	-
Vermont Council for Independent Living	1,800	1,800	-
	<u>586,700</u>	<u>622,849</u>	<u>(36,149)</u>
Total expenditures	<u>7,954,200</u>	<u>7,454,253</u>	<u>499,947</u>
Excess (deficiency) of revenues over expenditures	<u>(125,000)</u>	<u>140,472</u>	<u>265,472</u>
Other financing sources (uses):			
Operating transfers in (out):			
Administrative charges:			
Community Development Fund	45,000	45,000	-
Water Fund	50,000	50,000	-
Wastewater Treatment Fund	50,000	50,000	-
Transfer to Parking Fund	(20,000)	-	20,000
	<u>125,000</u>	<u>145,000</u>	<u>20,000</u>
Excess of revenues and other financing sources over expenditures	-	285,472	285,472
Fund balance, July 1, 2002	<u>1,398,918</u>	<u>1,398,918</u>	<u>-</u>
Fund balance, June 30, 2003	<u>\$ 1,398,918</u>	<u>1,684,390</u>	<u>285,472</u>

SECTION II

COMPLIANCE AND INTERNAL CONTROL



**Report on Compliance and on Internal Control Structure Over Financial
Reporting Based on an Audit of Financial Statements Performed in
Accordance with Government Auditing Standards**

The Select Board
Town of Bennington, Vermont

We have audited the financial statements of the Town of Bennington, Vermont as of and for the year ended June 30, 2003, and have issued our report thereon dated December 16, 2003. We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States.

Compliance

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether the Town of Bennington's financial statements are free of material misstatement, we performed tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts and grants, noncompliance with which could have a direct and material effect on the determination of financial statement amounts. However, providing an opinion on compliance with those provisions was not an objective of our audit and, accordingly, we do not express such an opinion. The results of our tests disclosed no instances of noncompliance that are required to be reported under *Government Auditing Standards*.

Internal Control Over Financial Reporting

In planning and performing our audit, we considered Town of Bennington's internal control over financial reporting in order to determine our auditing procedures for the purpose of expressing our opinion on the financial statements and not to provide assurance on the internal control over financial reporting. Our consideration of the internal control over financial reporting would not necessarily disclose all matters in the internal control over financial reporting that might be material weaknesses. A material weakness is a condition in which the design or operation of one or more of the internal control components does not reduce to a relatively low level the risk that misstatements in amounts that would be material in relation to the financial statements being audited may occur and not be detected within a timely period by employees in the normal course of performing their assigned functions. We noted no matters involving the internal control over financial reporting and its operation that we consider to be material weaknesses.

This report is intended solely for the information and use of management, others within the organization, the Select Board, and federal awarding agencies and pass-through entities and is not intended to be and should not be used by anyone other than these specified parties

Fisk Reed & Love, P.C.

December 16, 2003

Vt. Reg. #357

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AGENCIES

The reports included herein are from those Agencies
which received Town funds in 2003.

The following agency did not submit a report:

Vermont Center For Independent Living (VCIL)

BENNINGTON AREA HOME HEALTH AGENCY

Bennington Area Home Health provided home care services to 1,127 residents of Bennington, North Bennington, Woodford, Pownal and Shaftsbury during the time period of October 1, 2002 to September 30, 2003. These visits were provided to individuals ranging in age from newborn to over 100 years of age.

<u>Service</u>	<u>Volume</u>
Nursing	17,173
Physical Therapy	3,400
Speech Therapy	189
Occupational Therapy	964
Social Work	416
Home Health Aide/PCA	21,074
Homemaker	<u>1,810</u>
Total Visits	45,931

Bennington Area Home Health provides access for medically necessary home care services regardless of ability to pay, and provides access to health and flu clinics. These services are made possible through town funding and charitable contributions.

Thank you for your continued support.

Respectfully submitted,
Julie H. Maroney, RN, Executive Director

BENNINGTON COUNTY REGIONAL COMMISSION

The following is a summary of services and projects during the past year. Check our web site: www.rpc.bennington.vt.us

Municipal Assistance:

Arlington - Arlington/East Arlington sidewalk, Arlington Area Childcare Inc. grant, Town Plan stats, Route 7A/313 intersection, cell phone coverage/study grant, solid waste plan, bridge & culvert inventory, zoning telecom maps, 911, ArcExplorer & GPS training, plan approval; **Bennington** - Roaring Branch issues, Ross Pavilion grant, Hampton Inn data, Bypass info to legislators, Bald Mt. trail/bypass crossing, pathway projects, Route 67A access management pilot grant, road network study, airport, enhancement grant, consultant support for park and recreation plan, tree inventory map, WHIPS map, input to state study of bypass needs, zoning maps, Middle School trail map and sidewalk study, ArcView training; **Dorset** - ridgeline zoning, plan approval, plan stats/update, housing study/maps, East Dorset transportation improvements, Dorset horse show/Act 250, home occupations, highway structures, zoning & conservation maps, solid waste plan, ArcView training; **Glastenbury** - Plan update, zoning administration, land swap/wilderness/wind turbines, parcel maps; **Landgrove** - plan approval, solid waste info, So.VT trail, data info.; **Manchester** - consultant support for underground utility study, cell phone coverage study, Malfunction Junction project management, Manchester TPI & Economic Committee, solid waste plan, hazardous waste collection, Equinox wind turbines, multi-use paths, aquifer map; **Manchester Village** - Equinox wind turbines, solid waste plan, zoning map, telecom/cell coverage study, bridge/culvert study, GPS training; **North**

Bennington Village - designation, bridge culvert inventory, pathway project, Park McCullough Enhancements, school district map, Route 67A retaining wall, intersection design study, Village plan & trail maps; **Old Bennington Village** - Plan update, traffic calming study & maps, Corkscrew pathway study; **Peru** - path/traffic calming study, zoning info; **Pownal** - Oak Hill Childcare grant, Green Mt. Track map, Pownal sewer project, plan & zoning maps, Tannery lands project/mapping, sewer map, 911 map, resource inventory/trails maps, solid waste plan; **Rupert** - Town Plan info & approval, solid waste & hazardous waste collection, defibulator grant, Route 153 flood damage grant, bridge #6 report/grant, planning grant; **Sandgate** - Town plan & maps, solid waste plan, bridge & culvert inventory, parcel map update, hazardous waste collection; **Shaftsbury** - Plan update & maps/adoption procedures, zoning maps, mixed use zoning, floodplain issue, rail crossing safety, solid waste plan and amendments, multi-use paths/sidewalks, compost bin sales, economic study grant(s) bridge/culvert inventory; **Stamford** - ArcExplorer training, solid waste plan, Rapid Response Plan, road name maps; **Sunderland** - draft subdivision regulations, Town office site map, plan update and map, solid waste plan, Route 7A traffic access study, bridge & culvert inventory, GPS training, hazardous waste collection; **Woodford** - zoning recreation overlay revision & map, town plan approval, cell antenna zoning permit, Route 9 corridor study.

Regional Projects/Services:

Molly Stark Route 9 Scenic Byway study/designation, regional solid waste plan, all-hazards emergency operations, and pre-disaster plans, VIT planning/zoning training, Regional Transportation Plan, 9-Town Solid Waste Plan, Strategic Economic Plan, grant management and assistance, brownfields grant proposal, recreation use & issues survey, public transportation assistance, village center designations, access management inventories/town plans, road capacity/intersection studies, Batten Kill geomorphic/land cover study, workshops/training for local officials and distribution of educational materials.

Current Regional Issues:

Other regional issues: Green Mt. National Forest Plan update, wilderness, Glastenbury land swap/Searsburg wind farm proposal, Equinox wind turbine project, Route 9 scenic byway, emergency management/planning support, permit reform, solid waste, access management and village improvements, Bennington bypass issues, Arlington area cell phone coverage, rail/airport service, strategic economic plan, affordable housing.

Respectfully submitted,
Robert M. Hartwell, Chairman

Respectfully submitted,
Rex Burke, Executive Director

BENNINGTON FREE LIBRARY

The Bennington Free Library received a second incentive grant from the Vermont Public Library & Freeman Foundations in 2002-2003 to automate the Library's collections and services.

Five computer workstations already in use [four of them from the Gates Foundation] make up a growing portion of the Library's developing computer services with an average of 159 people using them during a typical week, over 8,000 for the year. More than 70 people were trained to use the computers last year.

The Library's web site [www.bennington.lib.vt.us/index.html] contains information about new books, magazines, programs and services, open hours and telephone number.

Bennington area registered borrowers number 15,025. Almost 95,000 people visited the Library last year, and 85,000 books, magazines, and tapes were borrowed.

Services

194 free programs were offered to 8,510 participants, 35 of which were fully or partially underwritten by other organizations.

Facilities

The Library's centrally located public meeting rooms are available free of charge [to non-profits], and were used extensively by 88 groups, such as AARP, PAVE, SVSU, and UCS.

Volunteers

The entire group of 68 "RE-CON Volunteers" [short for Retrospective Conversion] received the Eugene and Elisabeth Clark Outstanding Library Service Award for their help in preparing the Library's book and tape collections for conversion to an automated system. Together with the regular corps of 21 who work throughout the Library's many departments, a total of 89 volunteers contributed 4,148 hours last year.

Friends of the Library

The Friends were very active in their support for the Library sponsoring the annual book sale in May, conducting their annual membership drive, and offering the winter reading series. The Holiday Wish List netted \$582.25 and added 36 new books to the collections.

Grants

In addition to the second year VPLF/Freeman Grant, the Library received financial support from the Southwestern Vermont Council on Aging, the Bennington Region Early Childhood Council & Vermont Child Care Services, Success by Six, the Vermont Department of Health, the Catamount Rotary Club, Friends of the Bennington Free Library, and from the Towns of Bennington, Shaftsbury, and Woodford. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,
Anita M. Gauthier, Director

BENNINGTON PROJECT INDEPENDENCE, INC.

Bennington Project Independence (BPI) provides Adult Day Care and Day Health Rehabilitation Services for frail older persons and younger disabled adults and their families from Bennington, North Bennington and the surrounding communities.

In 2003, the voters of Bennington and North Bennington supported a level allocation of \$10,600 for the Adult Day Care Services at Bennington Project Independence. With that excellent investment, BPI was able to provide an exceptional range of Adult Day Care and Health Rehabilitative Services for Bennington and North Bennington families in need.

Bennington Project Independence continued to provide a safe, sensitive and supportive Adult Day Program for a wide range of Bennington residents. BPI Participants include persons with delicate or chronic medical conditions that may need care or support, persons who are socially isolated or living alone without the support of close family or friends as well as a significant number of persons with Alzheimer's Disease and other types of cognitive impairments who need specialized assistance. Many of our Participants have multiple needs that place them at risk of nursing home placement. Participation in our program enables people to receive care and be as active and independent as possible during the day and return to the comfort of their own home or their family's home at night.

Our goal is to help people get the most out of their lives and prevent premature institutional placement of persons potentially at risk. BPI is here to help family care givers provide the best possible care for their loved ones. Knowing that an elderly or disabled family member has a safe, caring and interesting day center to attend, allows the family to continue to work, take care of their own children or take care of the other important aspects of their lives. Elder care is predicted to surpass childcare as the number one dependent care issue facing families in less than ten years. One in four people are involved in some form of caring for a loved one. Care giving without support or relief can have a profoundly stressful effect on all of the family as well as our community.

With continued support from communities such as Bennington and North Bennington, BPI was better able to serve working care givers. We were able to strengthen the family support component of our program with our "Families Together" monthly gatherings and expand the range of healthcare and supportive, meaningful activities that we provide. We also focused on enhancing our ability to provide care and assistance for individuals from early to the end stages of Alzheimer's Disease.

Our activities are opportunities. Our professional staff offers a wide range of social and recreational activities, fitness and wellness groups, community trips and intergenerational events. Our Nurses provide an impressive range of health care services. Our handicapped accessible vans help us provide community access and individualized assistance. We also provide social work consultation and personalized, confidential care giver education, assistance and support.

We, at Bennington Project Independence are truly grateful for the continued support from the residents of Bennington and North Bennington and we look forward to continuing to provide the highest quality of Adult Day Care and Day Health Rehabilitation Services for Bennington and North Bennington individuals and families in need. Bennington Project Independence is here to help family care givers "share the care".

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Wichlac, Executive Director

BENNINGTON RUTLAND OPPORTUNITY COUNCIL (BROC)

First, BROC would like to take this opportunity to thank the citizens of Bennington who have supported the agency through the appropriation process over the years, acknowledging the important work we do. This past year BROC continued to experience a large increase in limited income families who needed help just meeting their basic needs – enough food on the table; heat for warmth through the winter; and a roof over their heads.

BROC helped meet the basic needs of 861 families in the Town of Bennington between 10/1/02 and 9/30/03. This number included 96 homeless families that needed transitional or permanent housing assistance. In addition, BROC weatherized 45 homes, comprised of 85 individuals through our Weatherization & Energy Conservation program. BROC's Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) reimbursed 42 day care home providers in Bennington for serving nutritious meals to about 420 children in their care and our Micro Business Development Program worked with 8 individuals interested in starting or expanding a small business. BROC also created several new partnerships and collaborations throughout the year with local organizations and businesses to help raise food for our emergency food shelf; as well as to help raise much needed funds through events and fund raising so that the needs of our neighbors continue to be met.

BROC staff work hard each and every day to not only address immediate crisis, but to work on developing prevention plans with each person who needs our help. We are very proud of moving an individual or family up from the effects of poverty in their lives. In doing so, we advance our mission of "Helping people. Changing Lives." And we thank you, the Bennington community, for helping make this possible.

Our appropriation request for the upcoming year is \$7,800.00.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda G. Rooker, Executive Director

JOHN G. MCCULLOUGH FREE LIBRARY

The John G. McCullough Free Library in North Bennington continues to offer free membership to patrons of all ages from North Bennington, Bennington, Shaftsbury and other nearby towns. Our schedule is as follows: Tuesday & Wednesday 1:00—8:00, Thursday & Friday 1:00—6:00, Saturday 10:00—2:00, Sunday & Monday closed. The Library provides meeting space at no cost for non-profit community groups.

This year was a busy one for us. With the use of a grant from the Vermont Public Library Foundation (funded by the Freeman Foundation) we were able to make several important improvements. After much preparation, our automated circulation and catalog system went into use. This has greatly streamlined the checking out/in process, and provides us with more accurate information about our collection and patrons. Another much appreciated addition this year was the installation of air conditioning. Many thanks to Graphitek, Inc. who donated a colorful sign to publicize our new "cool" status. The VPLF/Freeman Foundation grant will also help us expand our collections, especially in specific areas such as video and audio materials. This year saw the debut of the Vermont Online Library. This

service makes available a wealth of online, ad-free information, including the full text of thousands of magazines. The VOL can be accessed at the library, or through your home computer, 24 hours a day—contact us for details.

Last year the library's Board approved a Long Range Plan. This plan outlines our projected activities and goals. You can read it at our web site: www.mccullough.lib.vt.us, or stop by for a copy. As part of the effort to fulfill these objectives, the library purchased and demolished the building next door on West Street, with an eye towards future expansion. We would like to add more space for a quiet reading area, a private meeting room, an accessible bathroom, and an elevator or lift.

Programs for children included our Wed. afternoon Story Time. Ice cream sundaes (thanks to Friendly's and Hannaford's) were a hit at our Family Story Times on balmy summer evenings. A musical program by folk singer/storyteller Margaret McArthur capped off the Summer Reading Program, which was built around the theme of Food Feasts. In October we welcomed a performer from Portland, ME, Michael Parent, who sang, told stories and juggled. This fall we kicked off a new monthly program, the World Travelers Club, in which a country or region of the globe is explored through stories, dancing, crafts and food. So far we have journeyed to Africa, Australia, and Ecuador. This program will continue through May of 2004. We also received a grant of \$2000 worth of children's books from the Children's Literacy Foundation, which were presented at an assembly at the North Bennington Graded School.

On June 6th, the anniversary of D-Day, we co-hosted a reading with the Bennington Bookshop by local author Alex Kershaw, who read from his latest book, The Bedford Boys. In conjunction with the Vermont Humanities Council and the Park-McCullough House, Professor Geraldine Pittman-Battle of Marlboro College led a reading group this summer on Victorian literature. Professor Pittman-Battle returned in the fall to lead another group on the Deptford novels of Robertson Davies. We are also pleased to announce the creation of an ongoing informal monthly book discussion group, which will read contemporary literature of its own choosing. The cost of renting book sets is covered by the VPLF/Freeman Foundation grant. Another program we introduced this year, Passports For Fun, allows our patrons to check out a pass good for free admission to several area attractions, museums and cultural institutions.

Kim Cushman is the chair of our Board, Rachel Schumacher serves as Sec.-Treas., and our other trustees are Forrest Snyder, Rachel Blumenthal, Anne Hunter, Joe Mueller, Mary Feidner and Wendy Woods.

Respectfully submitted,
Julie Zelman, Librarian

PARAN RECREATIONS, INC.

During the summer of 2003 Lake Paran continued its tradition of providing a pristine lakefront for the community. It still is the only local lake that provides life guards.

Paran Recreations expanded its Music At Lake Paran program. These concerts were well attended and attracted both old and new lake lovers to six beautiful musical events. Rental canoes were again available for use and the office provided food at a reasonable price.

Recycling of all recyclable trash was continued this year hiring local companies.

Family and single membership increased dramatically this year. There were 568 day visitors, 115 from Shaftsbury, 243 from Bennington, 135 from North Bennington, and 75 from outlying areas. Memberships totaled to 145, of which 12 were from Shaftsbury, 37 from Bennington, 79 from North Bennington, and 17 from outside the vicinity. In addition the Lake also provides group memberships to several local organizations. We look forward to serving these and other families in the coming year.

We will continue our efforts to enhance Lake Paran as a community resource and ask for your continued support.

Respectfully submitted,
Stuart Freyer, President

PROJECT AGAINST VIOLENT ENCOUNTERS (PAVE)

In 2003 PAVE continued to offer comprehensive services to victims of domestic and sexual violence. Those services include: 24-hour emergency hotline, court and social service advocacy, support groups, transitional housing, emergency financial assistance, information and referrals, community education, healthy relationship curriculum for schools and access to several different types of emergency, safe housing. Services are free and confidential.

All volunteer advocates are trained and supervised by staff. These dedicated citizens helped us provide safety, support and options to more than 1,000 individuals in the past year. The volunteer coordinator continues a vigorous recruitment process and tailors the training schedule to the needs of potential volunteers.

Our supervised visitation program, Family Time, provides children with safe access to their non-custodial parent. The size of this program has doubled in the past year. The nine trained monitors supervise visits for families with issues related to violence, separation or divorce. Visits take place in neutral locations throughout the community.

We continue to offer violence prevention programming to young people throughout Bennington County. Our focus this year is on: healthy relationships – high school, community service – middle school, and management of anger – “Hands are not for hitting” – elementary grades. In addition in collaboration with CAT-TV we are developing a teen video project that will enable high school students to raise and address issues of importance to local teenagers.

On behalf of our Board of Directors and staff I thank you for your ongoing commitment to PAVE. Our staff and volunteers promise to continue to offer quality services for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault and respond to each town's desire for healthy and violence free communities.

Respectfully submitted,
Joan M. Sakalas, Executive Director

THE BENNINGTON COUNTY RETIRED AND SENIOR VOLUNTEER PROGRAM (RSVP)

The goal of RSVP remains one of *"reinvesting the talents and skills of a lifetime"* in our communities through volunteer service. RSVP initiates and develops programs for seniors who wish to volunteer and provides support to volunteers in the form of excess liability insurance, training, transportation, and recognition. There are currently 468 Bennington residents actively serving as RSVP volunteers in 86 nonprofit agencies and public institutions in the Bennington area. During this past fiscal year the town of Bennington received a total of **39,520 hours** of service from RSVP volunteers. Using a modest figure of **\$10.00** per hour, this service represents a total value of **\$390,520** returned to the community!

These 468 RSVP volunteers serve in a variety of ways that benefit citizens in communities throughout Bennington County. Examples include coordinating volunteer recognition functions; serving in an advisory capacity to the RSVP project director and as board members to other area agencies; participating in fund raising events; delivering meals on wheels; knitting or crocheting lap blankets for nursing home residents, or mittens, hats and scarves for children in area daycare centers; and assembling bulk mailings for agencies with a critical need to get their service information out to community residents.

This year we have collaborated with The Green Mountain Chapter of the American Red Cross to offer "Preparing for the Unexpected" presentations to the Bennington community. Attendees become better prepared in the case of a local disaster such as a fire, major snowstorm or power outage. Local Bennington RSVP volunteers have been trained to make the presentations.

Thank you for your continued support of RSVP of Bennington County.

Respectfully submitted,
Patricia M. Palencsar, Director

SOUTHWESTERN VERMONT COUNCIL ON AGING

This report briefly describes the services and support provided to elders in Bennington by the Southwestern Vermont Council on Aging during the past year; these included:

Senior Meals:

The Council provided funding for meals served to elder residents of Bennington. This funding helped make available 19,851 meals that were prepared and delivered to the homes of 157 older persons in your community who were in need of this special support. This service, provided through contract, is often referred to as "Meals on Wheels". We also supplied "Blizzard Bags" to Meals on Wheels participants and other isolated elders, containing "shelf-stable" meals for use in a weather related or other emergency situation. In addition, 162 Bennington elders participated at one or more of the luncheon sites available in our region, enjoying 5,261 meals.

Case Management Assistance:

371 elder residents of your community were served by SVCOA Case Management staff who provided help with applications and problem solving around programs such as Fuel Assistance, SSI, Medicaid, Food Stamps, etc. Case Managers also helped frail elders who were facing long term care placement, assisting those who wanted to and were able to remain independent connect with available supports including Medicaid Waiver assistance.

Other Services:

The Council on Aging also made available the following services to help support older persons in your community: 1) Telephone support through our "Senior HelpLine" (786-5991 or 1-800-642-5119). This service provided easy phone access to elders and others in need of information about available programs and supports for older persons; 2) Health benefit counseling information and form filing assistance through our SHIP Program; 3) Legal service support through a contract with the Vermont Senior Citizens Law Project; 4) Provision of information related to elder issues through the "Elder Connection" column written by Barbara Hanson appearing weekly in the Bennington Banner; 5) Nutrition education and counseling provided by a Registered Dietician to elders who needed to improve their dietary intake; 7) Senior Companion support on a one on one basis for frail, homebound elders; 8) Elder Care Clinician outreach services to elders struggling with a variety of mental health issues provided through a contract with United Counseling Services; 9) Community Development assistance and 10) Care giver information and support for family members and others who are providing help to elders in need of care.

Respectfully submitted,
Claire Granger, Case Management Supervisor

THE TUTORIAL CENTER

This past year at The Tutorial Center has been one of exciting growth. Due to the support from the Town of Bennington and other regional towns, we were able to provide a growing range of unique and vital services to area residents of all ages. Our goal remains, Literacy For All. We invite all community members to visit us at our site at 208 Pleasant St. in Bennington.

Once again this year, The Tutorial Center has been recognized by the Vermont Department of Education as the most cost-effective adult basic education provider in the state. We pride ourselves on stretching every dollar to its limit.

This past fall, the Bridge-to-College program we offer in partnership with CCV Bennington was honored out of 25 similar programs with an award for its "excellent adult ed/college partnership."

A special highlight of this past year was the opening of a Community Computer Lab in our Manchester branch, *which was made possible entirely through donations*. In recognition of The Tutorial Center's role as a community education provider, IBM donated over \$30,000 in computer equipment, Microsoft donated \$33,000 in software, Adelphia provided high-speed internet access, and Southern Vermont College provided free technical support to establish the Lab. This Lab now complements the existing Lab in our Bennington branch and enables us to offer accessible computer literacy and computer-based instruction conveniently to all residents of Bennington County.

Overall highlights of our past year at The Tutorial Center include:

- **For adult learners-** 338 students were enrolled in basic education classes (a 10% increase over the previous year) and received approximately 9,500 hours of FREE instruction; 73 adults passed the GED exam or received their high school diploma; 25 adults received English as a Second Language instruction; 27 adults were enrolled in our award-winning Bridge-to-College program; and 52 adults participated in basic computer skills classes.
- **For children-** 173 students received individual tutoring instruction, with a total of 3,656 hours of instruction provided – virtually all subject areas were taught including all levels of math, reading, writing, and foreign languages; more than 15 students enrolled in an alternative education program offered at The Tutorial Center; and 38 students participated in our summer enrichment program.
- **For families-** 7 community family literacy workshops called *Building Links* were offered.

The Town of Bennington has generously supported the work of The Tutorial Center for many years. We are very grateful to the town for supporting our literacy efforts in the past and we look forward to your continued support.

Respectfully submitted,
Jack Glade, Executive Director

CENTER FOR RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

In 1979 Court Diversion began as a program that offered a community's response to juvenile offenses as an alternative to the formal court procedure. The Diversion Review Board, a volunteer board of community citizens, strives to respond to the needs of the victim by mandating apologies and restitution, to the community by requiring public service and donations, and to the offender by demanding participation in programs that may change behavior such as job training, parenting skills, GED tutoring, alcohol & other drug screening, therapy, etc.

Over the years this opportunity has been expanded to include adults; other programs have been added as well. Today Court Diversion is an agency sponsoring several grant-funded programs; Juvenile Restorative Probation Program, and Community Support and Supervision Program (Street Checkers) which provide support and supervision to at-risk adolescents, as well as traditional Diversion. Additionally, in July 2000 the Teen Alcohol Safety Program (TASP) was established in response to a change in legislation that decriminalizes first-offense Possession of Malt Beverage charges. The Court Diversion Program was designated as administrator of this program by the State. Now a civil ticket, the legislature mandated that every young person be assessed and treated, if necessary, for their alcohol use. We believe prevention, education, and treatment, as well as enforcement, will help to stem the tide of underage alcohol consumption.

54% of Court Diversion referrals and **25%** of TASP referrals are Bennington residents. **91%** of all referrals are under the age of 21. **87%** of Diversion participants successfully completed the requirements of their Diversion contract. **91%** of those who complete their requirements do not commit further criminal acts. In addition, Court Diversion participants have returned over **\$58,000** in restitution and donations to their communities and

performed over **31,000** hours of public service work. The Senior Meals Program, American Red Cross, Bennington Project Independence, Happy Days Childcare, Second Chance Animal Shelter and the Martha Canfield Library are some of the organizations or projects that have benefited from Diversion clients' community service work or charitable donations.

Although the Juvenile Restorative Probation Program and the Community Support and Supervision Program (Street Checkers) are self-sustaining through grants from the Agency of Human Services, the Court Diversion Program and Teen Alcohol Safety Program must rely on local fund-raising to supplement the appropriation from the legislature and client fees.

We thank the voters of Bennington for their support and look forward to continuing our commitment to provide programs that respond to the needs of the victim, the community and the offender.

Respectfully submitted,
Marianne Kennedy, Esq., Executive Director

2003

FLOOR MEETING MINUTES

AND

ELECTION RESULTS

**TOWN OF BENNINGTON
2003 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING**

**BENNINGTON FIRE FACILITY
MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM – 3RD FLOOR
130 RIVER STREET
BENNINGTON, VERMONT**

**MONDAY, MARCH 3, 2003
7:30 P.M.**

MINUTES

May JHC
MODERATOR: James Colvin.

SELECT BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair-Sharon Brush; Vice-Chair-Joseph Krawczyk, Jr.; Salvatore Santarcangelo; Ronal Hall; Michael Lochner; James Gulley and Lodie Colvin.

ALSO PRESENT: Treasurer-William Burfeind; Town Clerk-Timothy Corcoran; Town Manager-Stuart Hurd; Assistant Treasurer-Cindy Palmer; Ron Knapp; Scott Creedy; Bob Burgess; Barry Horst; Bob Matteson; Wes Mook; Bill Colvin; Dan Monks; Justine Scanlon; Mary Morrissey; Mark Shepard; Ron Pembroke; Alicia Romac; Joe Carroll; Joe Hall; Linda Putney; Bill Hassenphlug; Eric Peterson; John Goodrich; Marty Krautheim; Bill Wicks; Marta and Charles Koslovski; Barbara MacIntyre; Katherine Creedy; +/- forty (40) other citizens; Peter Crabtree-Rutland Herald; Bobby Gates-Bennington Banner and Nancy Lively-Secretary.

At 7:30 P.M., Moderator James Colvin called the meeting to order.

Mr. Colvin then read the Warning: "The residents of the Town of Bennington qualified by law to vote in Town Meeting are hereby notified and warned to meet at the Bennington Fire Facility on River Street (Lincoln Street entrance) in said Town on Monday, March 3, 2003, at 7:30 p.m., to transact the business specified to be done from the floor. Following the completion of such business, the Meeting will stand adjourned to Tuesday, March 4, 2003, at The Bennington Fire Facility on River Street (Lincoln Street entrance) at 7:00 a.m. for the election of officers and voting on all ballot articles specified. However, those on the checklist to vote in the Village of North Bennington shall vote for the election of officers and on all ballot articles at the North Bennington Firehouse in that Village. The Bennington Fire Facility above mentioned, is hereby established as the central polling place for those on the checklist to vote in said Bennington. The deadline for registering to vote is February 22, 2003 at 12:00 noon at the Bennington Town Clerk's Office."

Joseph Carroll requested a moment of silence be observed in honor and remembrance of several prominent citizens, as well as, indeed all citizens, who had passed away during the previous year.

BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED FROM THE FLOOR

ARTICLE 1. TOWN REPORT: To hear the report of Town Officers and to take appropriate action thereon.

*Joe Carroll moved and it was seconded to accept the Town Report as presented.
The motion carried unanimously.*

ARTICLE 2. SELECT BOARD MEMBERS COMPENSATION: To determine what compensation shall be paid the Town Select Board Members.

The Select Board Members are presently paid \$1,300.00 annually – an increase of \$100 was implemented last year.

Justine Scanlon moved and Joseph Carroll seconded to increase the Select Board Members Compensation to \$2,500.00

Charles Koslovski requested the reasoning behind increasing the salaries almost 200%, and Ms. Scanlon responded that the Select Board members put in "more time than we can know, and I still think that's a bargain".

Joseph Hall added that he feels it should be left the same.

Timothy Corcoran moved and it was seconded to amend the motion to leave the Select Board Member Compensation at \$1,300.00. The motion to amend the original motion carried with three against. The amended motion carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 3. OTHER BUSINESS: To transact such other proper business when met. (This includes discussion of articles on the Town Meeting ballot.)

ARTICLE 1. Shall the Town appropriate for the next fiscal year, July 1, 2003 through June 30, 2004, the total sum of \$7,584,930.00 consisting of the following: \$2,274,920.00 for the laying out, maintaining, and repairing of the highways and bridges of the Town; and \$5,310,010.00 for the payment of the following: Any indebtedness not otherwise specifically provided for, interest on indebtedness, legally authorized State and County taxes, the prosecution and defense of the common rights and interests of the inhabitants of the Town, and for other necessary incidental expenses? The proposed budget includes \$40,000.00 for Fire Equipment, \$10,000.00 for parking improvements, and \$106,270.00 for healthcare deductibles and workers compensation insurance, any unexpended portion of which will be reserved to subsequent years for that purpose.

There was no discussion on Article 1.

ARTICLE 3. (Advisory) Do the voters of the Town of Bennington support the following resolution? "Be it resolved that the citizens of the Town of Bennington urgently call upon our municipal leaders, state legislators, governor, and Congressional delegation to put Vermont in the forefront of a sustainable energy future. Specifically, we request immediate and ongoing action on legislative initiatives designed to promote energy efficiency in Vermont's homes, businesses, public buildings, and transportation systems, and to encourage expansion of the renewable energy industry in the State of Vermont."

Linda Putney cited 15 reasons why it is important to be in favor of this resolution and stated that 85 other towns would be voting on this, as well.

Joseph Hall asked if an increase for Energy Vermont was presently in the legislature, and Mr. Colvin answered that the issue was brought before the Public Service Board and not handled through the legislative committee process. Mr. Colvin added that there was a compromised increase approved for Efficiency Vermont, but that is a separate issue from the renewable energy bill. Mr. Corcoran stated that this bill was stalemated before the Conference Committee when there was a risk of losing IBM, and therefore, 2,500 jobs. Mr. Hall's concern with the resolution is the increased electric costs that may accompany it that would slow down the economic growth in the State.

Article 4. Shall the Town of Bennington amend the Town Charter, Section 201, Elective Officers as follows: Brackets []: Indicates deleted material. Underline ____: Indicates new material added.
Sec. 201. Elective officers

[a] The elective officers of the town shall be

[1] Seven Select Board Members elected from the Town at large at a duly warned Annual Town Meeting; [each for a three year term to commence as follows: three Select Board Members as of March, 1986; four Select Board Members as of March 1987 with two Select Board Members serving for a three year term and two Select Board Members serving for a one year term; commencing in 1988 and thereafter, all Select Board Members shall hold office for three years or until their successors are qualified.]

[2] a town clerk; [3] a treasurer; [4] a moderator.

[b] All elective officers [other than Select Board Members] shall hold office for a three year[s] term. The term shall expire [or until their successors are qualified] the first day of April following the Annual Town Meeting.

Timothy Corcoran explained that all this Article is doing is giving the term a definite expiration date.

Article 5. Shall the Town of Bennington amend the Town Charter, Section 506-510, relating to the creation, operation and dissolution of the Bennington Downtown District, as warned? (The complete wording is in the booth.) This amendment changes the Downtown Improvement Commission to an advisory board and places responsibility for the District with the Select Board and Manager with advice from the Commission. It eliminates the District Tax on properties within the District and allows the Select Board to assess any needed tax against all properties within the Town.

William Colvin explained the objectives of this Article emphasizing that there would be no tax increase this year, and if we transfer the \$40,000 present DIC budget directly to the general fund, the tax increase would be .0544, or \$5.44 on a \$100,000 property.

Joseph Krawczyk further explained the history of the tax and how involved every citizen is in the downtown, whether they realize it or not.

Ron Knapp reiterated that downtown does, indeed, belong to everyone.

Article 2. (Advisory) Do the voters of the Town of Bennington favor changing the Town Charter from a Town Manager form of government to a Mayoral form of government?

Bob Matteson stated that history has proven that we are better off with the leadership of an elected leader with "no criticism at all" intended toward the Select Board or Town Manager. The proposed change is a structural change in our form of government.

Joseph Krawczyk noted that it may be easier to go to just one person instead of seven, and the worst county in the State (Chittenden) for getting permits due to over development has a mayoral form of government. "I'll take our Town Plan and match it with any Town Plan in the State of Vermont." Mr. Krawczyk gave kudos to the Town Staff and the Select Board for their accomplishments, and assured everyone that if the mayoral form of government is the people's choice, the proper public channels would be followed for its implementation.

Eric Peterson stated that a "Yes" vote would force the Town to look at itself and face its issues out in the open.

Timothy Corcoran stated that "adding another layer of government" would set Bennington back several years, and our time would be better spent working on the system we have now.

Joseph Carroll noted the "outstanding job" that the present Select Board and Town Manager are doing for the Town.

John Goodrich stated that we need "a vision" to go forward – an individual can have a vision, seven people cannot.

William Hassenphlug and Marta Koslovski encouraged everyone to make what is the best decision to them.

Martin Krauthaim questioned the time frame for implementation, and Mr. Corcoran answered that there could be a two to three year transition period.

Bill Wicks asked how it would work with additional layers of government, but there are no answers to that at this time. Mr. Matteson spoke as to how he thought it would be.

Salvatore Santarcangelo reminded everyone of the increased cost that a mayoral form of government would mean to the Town, "\$50 per \$100,000". Mr. Goodrich rebutted that our Town with "a vision" would have a better tax rate, not worse.

William Colvin stated that cities in Vermont spend 55% more than towns, and encouraged the supporters of the change to work with the Town staff to obtain the goals that they hope to achieve with the change.

Barbara MacIntyre read the following Resolution:

"WE ARE CONCERNED

We are concerned that our tax dollars spent on the war with Iraq are taking away from our security needs at home. We urge you to insure that additional funds be released to be used for

training and equipment for police officers and fire fighters who respond first to the disasters. We also seek increased aid for the homeless as nearly 20% of veterans will believe in the good faith of their government."

Bill Wicks moved and Joseph Carroll seconded to accept the We Are Concerned Resolution.

Bill Wicks moved and Joseph Carroll seconded to amend the We Are Concerned Resolution by adding "We support our troops." The amendment was carried.

Michael Lochner warned that the troops overseas get a misconstrued version of "we support our troops" and do not receive the true intent of the gesture.

Katherine Creedy spoke in favor of the Resolution and the public's voice, in general.
The motion was carried.

Wes Mook expressed his support of the new Career Development Center Board idea and the positive impact that he feels it will have on the Town's economic development.

At 8:56 P.M., Salvatore Santarcangelo moved and it was seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy H. Lively
Secretary

TOWN MEETING ELECTION -- MARCH 4, 2003

Pursuant to the foregoing warning, the legal voters of the Town of Bennington met at 7 o'clock AM on Tuesday, March 4, 2003, and after the ballots had been counted, the following named persons and articles received the number of votes set opposite the names and articles designated.

<u>FOR SELECT BOARD</u>	<u>Bennington</u>	<u>N Bennington</u>	<u>Total</u>
Scott Creedy	1449	157	1606
Michael Lochner	1361	91	1452
Salvatore Santarcangelo	1231	70	1301
Write-Ins	21	1	
Blanks	1168	113	

And the said CREEDY and LOCHNER were declared elected.

ARTICLE 1: Budget

Yes	1918	174	2092
No	597	32	629
Blanks	100	13	

And it was so voted.

ARTICLE 2: Mayor

Yes	978	84	1062
No	1609	121	1730
Blanks	28	14	

And it was not voted.

ARTICLE 3: Renewable Energy Resolution

Yes	1875	161	2036
No	559	39	598
Blanks	181	16	

And it was so voted.

ARTICLE 4: Terms of office

Yes	1891	160	2051
No	517	28	545
Blanks	207	28	

And it was so voted.

ARTICLE 5: Downtown Taxing Dist.

Yes	1174	112	1286
No	1241	77	1318
Blanks	200	27	

And it was not voted.

Recorded March 5, 2003 at 12:30 PM by Timothy R. Corcoran, Town Clerk

2004

TOWN MEETING

WARNING

-WARNING-

**TOWN OF BENNINGTON
2004 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING**

The residents of the Town of Bennington qualified by law to vote in Town Meeting are hereby notified and warned to meet at the Bennington Fire Facility on River Street (Lincoln Street entrance) in said Town on Monday, March 1, 2004, at 7:30 p.m., to transact the business specified to be done from the floor.

Following the completion of such business, the Meeting will stand adjourned to Tuesday, March 2, 2004, at The Bennington Fire Facility on River Street (Lincoln Street entrance) at 7:00 a.m. for the election of officers and voting on all ballot articles specified. However, those on the checklist to vote in the Village of North Bennington shall vote for the election of officers and on all ballot articles at the North Bennington Firehouse in that Village. The Bennington Fire Facility above mentioned, is hereby established as the central polling place for those on the checklist to vote in said Bennington. The deadline for registering to vote is February 23, 2004 at 12:00 noon at the Bennington Town Clerk's Office.

BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED FROM THE FLOOR

Monday, March 1, 2004

7:30 P.M.

ARTICLE 1. TOWN REPORT: To hear the report of Town Officers and to take appropriate action thereon.

ARTICLE 2. SELECT BOARD MEMBERS COMPENSATION: To determine what compensation shall be paid the Town Select Board Members.

ARTICLE 3. OTHER BUSINESS: To transact such other proper business when met.

BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED BY BALLOT

TUESDAY, MARCH 2, 2004

**THE POLLS TO BE OPEN FROM 7:00 A.M. TO 7:00 P.M.
AT THE POLLING PLACES SPECIFIED ABOVE**

SELECT BOARD ELECTION. Three Select Board Members residing in the Town shall be elected for terms of three (3) years.

TOWN CLERK ELECTION. A Town Clerk residing in the Town shall be elected for a term of three (3) years.

TOWN TREASURER ELECTION. A Town Treasurer residing in the Town shall be elected for term of three (3) years.

TOWN MODERATOR ELECTION. A Town Moderator residing in the Town shall be elected for terms of three (3) years.

ARTICLE 1. Shall the Town appropriate for the next fiscal year, July 1, 2004 through June 30, 2005, the total sum of \$ 7,785,730.00 consisting of the following: \$ 2,238,370.00 for the laying out, maintaining, and repairing of the highways and bridges of the Town; and \$5,547,360.00 for the payment of the following: Any indebtedness not otherwise specifically provided for, interest on indebtedness, legally authorized State and County taxes, the prosecution and defense of the common rights and interests of the inhabitants of the Town, and for other necessary incidental expenses?

The proposed budget includes \$5,000.00 for Fire Equipment, \$10,000.00 for parking improvements, and \$ 115,400.00 for healthcare deductibles and workers compensation insurance, any unexpended portion of which will be reserved to subsequent years for that purpose.

YES ☐

NO ☐

ARTICLE 2. Shall the Town of Bennington issue bonds in an amount not to exceed \$7.0 million to construct improvements to its Water Treatment Facility and associated system?

YES ☐

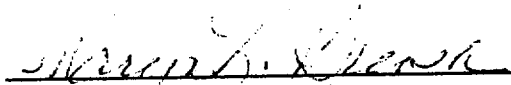
NO ☐

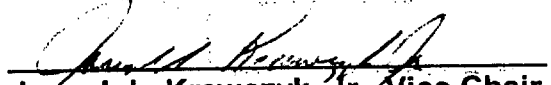
ARTICLE 3. Shall the voters of the Town of Bennington call upon the Governor, our State legislators, and regulatory agencies to support and actively work for: 1. the mandatory labeling of all genetically engineered (GE) food and seed; 2. legislation that will shift all liability for any damages resulting from the growing of GE crops from farmers to the commercial developers of the GE technology; and 3. a moratorium on the further growing of GE crops for commercial use in the State of Vermont until there is credible and independent scientific evidence that these products are not harmful to our health, the environment, and the survival of family farms.
(Advisory only)

YES ☐

NO ☐

BY THE SELECT BOARD


Sharyn L. Brush, Chair


Joseph L. Krawczyk, Jr., Vice Chair


Lodie Colvin

Scott Creedy

James A. Gulley, Sr.


Ronal P. Hall


Michael L. Lochner

Dated at Bennington, Vermont this 26th day of January, 2004.

SAH/mmj

K:\Manager\Michele\MyFiles\anntwnmtgs\tnwarn.04.wpd

TOWN OF BENNINGTON

BUDGET PROPOSAL FY2005

DEPARTMENT	FY2003 BUDGET	FY2003 ACTUAL	FY2004 BUDGET	PROPOSED FY2005 BUDGET
SELECT BOARD	14,450.00	14,851.00	14,900.00	14,400.00
TOWN MANAGER	154,850.00	146,654.00	151,030.00	160,030.00
ELECTIONS & BOARD OF CIVIL AUTHORITY	24,900.00	22,529.00	19,950.00	26,050.00
TOWN TREASURER	21,290.00	21,381.00	21,970.00	22,470.00
ACCOUNTING	140,150.00	139,772.00	150,310.00	159,540.00
LISTING	110,150.00	98,064.00	63,010.00	76,880.00
COLLECTIONS	63,620.00	56,650.00	61,480.00	63,450.00
TOWN CLERK	54,300.00	47,435.00	51,510.00	56,390.00
PERMIT-PLANNING-CODE ENFORCEMENT	228,860.00	233,876.00	222,730.00	242,150.00
ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	115,550.00	100,767.00	104,890.00	108,030.00
ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES	170,130.00	174,350.00	345,920.00	374,420.00
BUILDING AND GROUNDS	146,510.00	146,010.00	147,850.00	175,880.00
POLICE	1,970,660.00	1,956,904.00	2,036,690.00	2,113,230.00
FIRE DEPARTMENT	353,640.00	349,100.00	357,930.00	367,400.00
SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT	615,280.00	259,230.00	94,300.00	105,400.00
C E R C L A	43,350.00	24,756.00	18,800.00	14,300.00
CEMETERY	26,090.00	32,988.00	26,400.00	28,530.00
HEALTH OFFICER	5,780.00	5,375.00	5,780.00	8,370.00
ANIMAL CONTROL	8,180.00	7,951.00	8,210.00	8,220.00
PARKS & RECREATION	541,880.00	555,407.00	545,000.00	598,620.00
SENIOR CITIZENS	152,550.00	117,531.00	141,810.00	142,790.00
SENIOR CENTER BUILDING	48,510.00	42,784.00	76,420.00	54,900.00
HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS	23,400.00	26,635.00	23,400.00	24,800.00
OTHER IMPROVEMENTS	15,000.00	15,383.00	11,000.00	8,000.00
MISC CONTINGENCIES	111,000.00	3,101.00	15,000.00	39,000.00
LIBRARY BOND	26,150.00	24,745.00	23,330.00	21,190.00
FIRE BUILDING BOND	49,380.00	49,377.00	47,990.00	46,580.00
TAX ANTICIPATION NOTE	138,000.00	23,139.00	69,000.00	19,000.00
COUNTY TAX PAYMENTS	65,000.00	65,098.00	65,000.00	70,000.00
GRANTS AND SUBSIDIES	372,950.00	372,950.00	388,400.00	397,340.00
RESERVE FUND EXPENDITURES	0.00	138,928.00	0.00	0.00
TOTAL GENERAL FUND	5,811,560.00	5,273,721.00	5,310,010.00	5,547,360.00
HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT FUND	2,162,640.00	2,180,529.00	2,274,920.00	2,238,370.00
GRAND TOTAL	7,974,200.00	7,454,250.00	7,584,930.00	7,785,730.00

Instructions for Form HS-131

2004 Declaration of Vermont Homestead

DUE DATE: April 15, 2004

Why File a Declaration of Vermont Homestead? The declaration identifies your property as a homestead. You must file a declaration to receive the correct school property tax rate.

Who Files a Declaration of Vermont Homestead? The law requires you to file this declaration if you:

- Will be a Vermont resident on January 1, 2004; and
- Expect to be a Vermont resident on April 1, 2004; and
- Own and occupy the Vermont property as your principal home on April 1, 2004.

Only one eligible owner need file a Declaration. Individuals holding a life estate or living in the home they donated to a revocable trust also need to file.

Who Does NOT File a Declaration? Owners of commercial, business, vacation or second home properties do not file a declaration on those properties.

What is a Homestead? A homestead is your principal dwelling and improvements and all land listed on the parcel in your town. Your dwelling may have up to 25% of the floor space used for business purposes and still be considered a homestead.

What is NOT a Homestead? Properties used for business or as a vacation or second home are not homesteads. Any portion of a dwelling that is rented or held out for rent is not a homestead. The portion of a dwelling used for a business is not a homestead if that portion is more than 25% of the floor space of the dwelling. A separate building or improvement used for a business is not homestead property.

What is the Homestead School Property Tax Rate? For 2004, the statewide homestead school rate is \$1.10 per \$100 of property value. This funds the State per-student grant to each town. If your town spends more per student than the state grant, the homestead rate increases proportionally and will be more than \$1.10.

What is the Non-Homestead School Property Tax Rate? The non-homestead rate is \$1.59 per \$100 of property value and is not adjusted for above grant education spending.

When to File As early as possible but no later than April 15, 2004. You may file your declaration separately from your income tax or other property tax returns.

Late Filing You must file a declaration even if it is late. Penalties apply to a Declaration of Vermont Homestead filed after the due date at:

- 3% of the correct school property tax if the non-homestead school property tax rate is more than the homestead rate.
- 8% of the correct school property tax plus interest on the additional property tax from original due date if the homestead school property tax is more than the non-homestead rate.

Line Instructions

Enter your social security number, name, and address and, if applicable, for your spouse or civil union partner. Location: Enter the street or road location of the homestead. This cannot be a post office box.

EXAMPLES: 123 Maple Street 276 Route 12A

Line 1 VT School District Code: Enter the 3-digit school district code shown on your property tax bill. If the number is not on the bill, you can find the school district code for the place you will pay school property tax on

April 1, 2004 by going to the web at www.state.vt.us/tax or calling (866) 828-2865 (toll-free in VT) or (802) 828-2865 (local or out-of-state) or going to page 12 of the income tax booklet. If you are not sure of your school district code, check with your town clerk.

Line 2 Legal Residence: Enter the town or city name of legal residence. If you live where there is both a city and town with the same name, please specify city or town.

EXAMPLES: Rutland City or Rutland Town Barre City or Barre Town

Line 3 SPAN (School Property Account Number): This is a unique identification number for your homestead assigned by the town. Enter the 11-digit number printed on your property tax bill.

Lines 4a - 4d Special Situations: Check the box if one of these situations apply to you. Call 1-866-828-2865 (toll-free in VT) or 802-828-2865 (local or out-of-state) or go to www.state.vt.us/tax for more information.

Use whole numbers and round to the nearest percentage for Lines 5 and 6.

Line 5 Business Use of Dwelling: Up to 25% of your dwelling floor space may be used for business purposes with the entire dwelling taxed at the homestead school property tax rate. For business use over 25%, that portion of the dwelling is no longer part of the homestead and is taxed at the non-homestead school property tax rate. The business use percentage is generally the same as reported on your Federal income tax return. **EXAMPLE A:** Dwelling with total 1,800 square feet with 635 square feet used as a home office and inventory storage. You have 35.28% business use (635/1,800). Enter 35 for round whole percentage. Sixty-five percent of your dwelling will be taxed at the homestead rate and thirty-five percent at the non-homestead rate. **EXAMPLE B:** Dwelling with total 1,200 square feet homestead with 250 square feet used as a home office. You have 20.83% business use (250/1,200) rounded to 21%. Because this is less than 25%, enter 00. One hundred percent of the dwelling will receive the homestead tax rate.

Line 6 Rental Use of Dwelling: The portion of your dwelling (home) that you rent to another person is not your homestead and is taxed at the non-homestead tax rate. There is no 25% allowance. Any rental use must be reported. The rental use percentage is generally the same as reported on your Federal income tax return. **Example:** Dwelling is 1,800 square feet and you rent 365 square feet. You have 20.27% rental use (365/1,800). Enter 20 for rounded whole percentage. Eighty percent of your dwelling will be taxed at the homestead rate and twenty percent at the non-homestead rate.

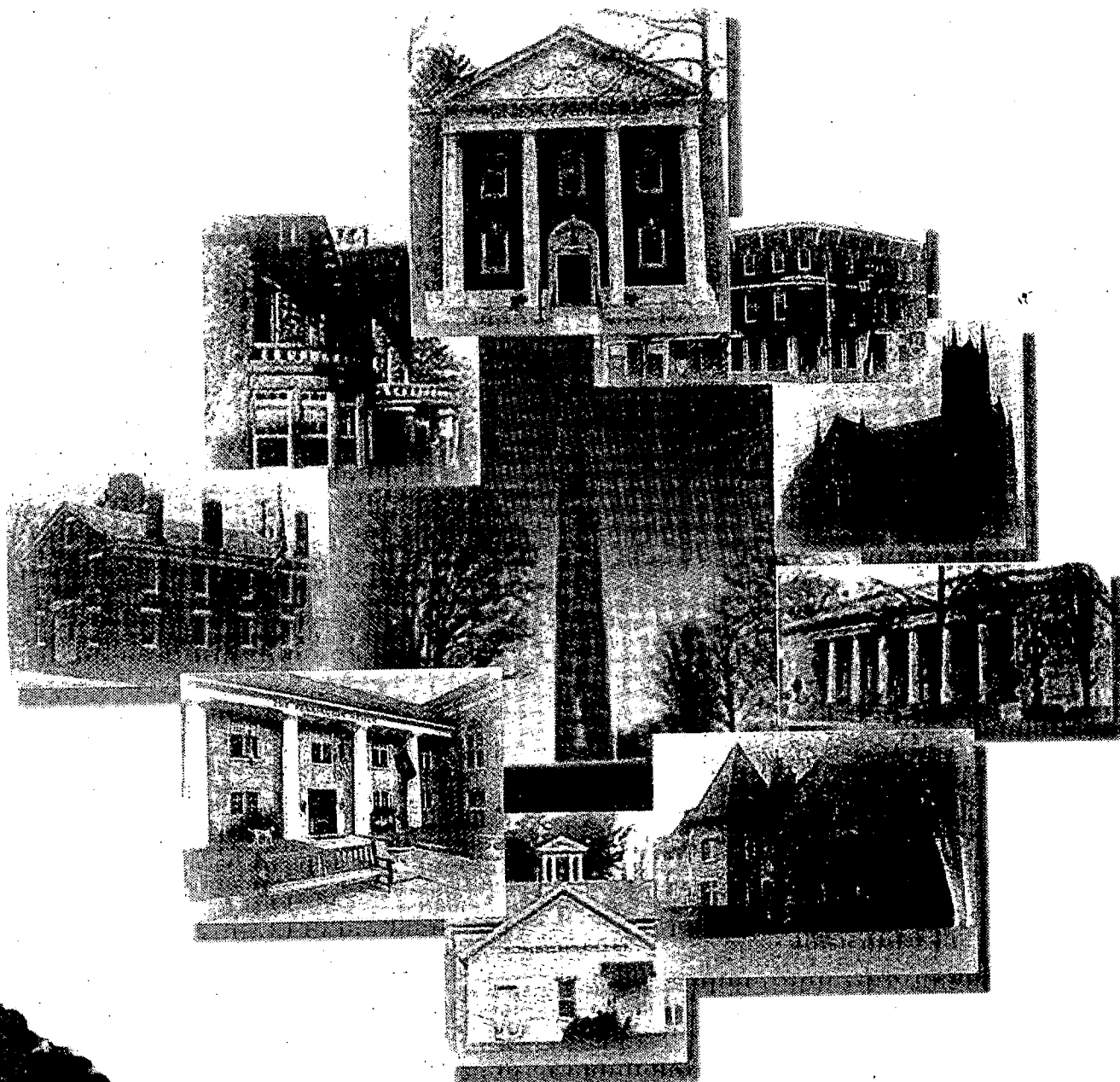
Line 7 Business or Rental Use of Improvements and Other Buildings on the Property: ☒ Check the applicable Yes or No box.

Check the Yes box if any improvements or other buildings are rented out. They will be taxed at the non-homestead school property tax rate.

Signature Sign the return in the space provided.

Disclosure Authorization ☒ If you wish to give the Department authorization to discuss your 2004 Declaration of Vermont Homestead with your tax preparer, check this box and include the preparer's name.

Preparer If you employed a paid preparer, he/she must also sign the form. The preparer must enter his/her social security number or PTIN and, if employed by a business, the EIN of the business. If someone other than the filer(s) prepared the declaration without charging a fee, the signature is optional.



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