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—For section.....Voices/Letters from readers
—Format.....LETTERS - Opinions - Letters to the Editor
—Dateline.....Brattleboro
—Article Number:.....43550



Notes from editor (not for publication):



HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

1 Brattleboro Selectboard meeting: avoidance dressed up
2 as civility

####END HED####

####BEGIN SUBHED####

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4 TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

5 When I tune into a Selectboard meeting, I expect public
6 input, respectful discourse, human emotion — and above all,
7 leadership.

8 Watching the April 21 Brattleboro Selectboard meeting, I
9 saw too little of the latter. What I witnessed was not decisive
10 leadership, but hesitation, deference, and an apparent inability to

11 move important agenda items forward without punting them
12 down the road.

13 Leadership is not tiptoeing around one another's feelings.
14 Leadership is making hard calls.

15 And because communication is often as much nonverbal
16 as verbal, body language matters. Repeatedly looking to one side
17 for reassurance may suggest collaboration — or it may raise
18 questions about who is actually leading. There is, after all, a
19 difference between teamwork and taking cues.

20 Public comment was cut short by not one but two adult
21 temper tantrums — one involving profanity and a dramatic exit.
22 Then, in response to one person storming off in a huff, a
23 motioned to adjourn, while multiple residents still had their
24 hands raised to speak — a remarkable display of priorities.

25 My view? Anyone who calls a Selectboard member an
26 expletive and storms out of a meeting has consciously forfeited
27 their role in that conversation. Yet, the meeting bent around the
28 walkout. So much for public engagement.

29 That is not leadership. That is avoidance dressed up as
30 civility.

31 We need leaders willing to stay in uncomfortable
32 conversations, confront disrespect in real time, and do the work
33 without fearing a few ruffled feathers. Name-calling and
34 aggression should be shut down, not indulged. Governance
35 should not pause every time someone storms off in protest.

36 I expect leaders to put on their grown-up pants and
37 govern. I want to think the hundreds of Brattleboro residents who
38 voted expected something a little more mature than infantile
39 theatrics.

40 My only regret while watching the April 21 meeting was
41 that I hadn't popped popcorn...because what a show!

####END TEXT####

BIO/COATTAIL:

####BEGIN BIO/COATTAIL####

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LAST ISSUE IN WHICH THIS FILE CAN BE RUN:

####BEGIN MAXISSUE####

43

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LINKS:

####BEGIN LINKS####

44

####END LINKS####

VIDEO:

####BEGIN VIDEO####

45

####END VIDEO####

LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

####BEGIN LOGLINE####

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####END LOGLINE####