

TOWN OF BENNINGTON

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Minutes of the Meeting – June 17, 2015

Selectmen James Cleary and Jeffrey Rose were present as well as Deputy Administrator Kristie LaPlante. The meeting was called to order at 6:07 p.m. Monadnock Ledger-Transcript reporter Ashley Saari was also in attendance.

Road Agent Gary Russell met with the Selectmen and discussed the following:

- The reported damage to Onset Road from an excavator appears to be cosmetic. The ripples in the roadway caused by the excavator's track have been smoothed out by traffic.
- Requested permission to remove approximately 30' of recently installed guardrail that abuts the driveway at 368 Bible Hill Road to alleviate excessive snow in the driveway from the wing of the plow. Also requested permission to install gravel at the end of the same driveway to reduce the slope. The Board of Selectmen will look at the driveway and project scope and provide feedback at a later date.
- The Board of Selectmen requested the Road Agent to prioritize repairs to a School Street fence that was damaged by snow removal operations.
- Reported he would begin shoulder and drainage work on Pine Meadows in July.
- Received authorization to forego paving in 2015 and consolidate paving and crushed gravel funds to make enough pug mill to shim Pine Meadows and the eastern most end of North Bennington Road.
- Requested feedback from the Board on the accrual of sick time during an extended leave of absence. The Board will look into this further before providing an answer.
- The Board authorized a fourth week of vacation to the Road Agent effective June 1, 2015.

Fire Chief Mike Roina met with the Selectmen and discussed the following:

- The Fire Chief has finalized the bid sheet for quotes for re-shingling the roof at the Fire Station. The Chief reports he needs to meet with the Town Administrator for approval of the bid sheet before it is sent out to contractors.
- Reported he has now missed five opportunities to finalize the 9-1-1 maps due to missing information from the Town Office. The next deadline is the end of December.
- Requested a decision on signage for the Whittemore Beach and the residence located on the access road to the Beach. The current sign says "Whittemore Beach Road" but the street numbers for the Beach and residence are Greenfield Road addresses. The Chief would like to remove the existing sign and finalize the street numbers for those two addresses. The Board declined to make a decision until Governor and Council finalizes the ownership of the access road dating back to the 1940s. The Board suggested adding the street numbers to a placard located under the "Whittemore Beach Road" sign; the Fire Chief disagreed with that strategy because he claims it is "false advertising".
- The Chief requested a change to the current Fire Department Payroll process, requesting the Town to pay from a report from their Software rather than continue the practice of cross referencing individual Run Sheets to the Software.

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- The Chief provided a “show and tell” of the Firehouse Software to familiarize the Board with the how the Software works. The Chief feels the documentation required by the Town is excessive and redundant. Roina has spoke with area Fire Departments who only provide a report from Firehouse Software to their Town Offices for payment.
- Deputy Administrator Kristie LaPlante explained that the Town requests and utilizes the Run Sheet information based on numerous examples in the past of inaccurate data. There has been, and continues to be, concern about true and accurate reporting noting that payroll information should be transparent and not require follow-up phone calls to the Fire Chief to address ambiguities. LaPlante reported she spoke with Inspector Berube from the NH Department of Labor and the Town’s Auditor Tammy Webb who both supported the Town’s current practice.
- The Board tabled any decision until the full Board is present.
- The Board inquired about a complaint they received about the appearance that the Fire Chief was utilizing the Brush Truck for personal use earlier in the week. Chief Roina reported his personal vehicle was in the shop for repairs and he utilized the Brush Truck because of the amount of gear he carries on behalf of the Town until he could secure a rental vehicle. The Board was in agreement that Chief Roina does a lot for the Town with his personal vehicle and agreed to the use of the Brush Truck for this one-time, extenuating circumstance.

Building Committee member Peter Martel met with the Selectmen to discuss the VFW renovation project. After a brief recap of the project’s history and potential costs the Board agreed to support Martel submitting a grant application to the Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP) for funding to rehab the VFW building. If the Grant is approved the project would have a 50/50 cost share. The Board stated they would like to be present if/when the NH Preservation Committee visits the site this fall.

From 8:10 p.m. until 8:27 p.m. the Selectmen met in Nonpublic Session under RSA 91-a:3II(c). Present were Selectmen Cleary, Rose, Deputy Administrator Kristie LaPlante, as well as Karen and Timothy Aucella. The Aucellas’ executed an Acknowledgement Under Forbearance of Tax Collector’s Deed for the unpaid 2012 tax levy.

The Selectmen took action on the following matters:

- Reviewed Minutes from the June 1, 2015 Recreation Committee meeting and the June 3, 2015 Energy Committee meeting. The Board tabled the Minutes of the Selectmen’s June 3, 2015 meeting until Selectmen Osienski is in attendance.
- Reviewed and approved Payroll Registers for June 10 and June 17, 2015 as well as Accounts Payable Registers for June 10 and June 17, 2015.
- Reviewed the Trust Fund Balances as of May 31, 2015.
- Reviewed the Invitation to Bid for Phase II of the Pedestrian Safety Improvements Project that will be published Statewide on June 18. The deadline for bid submission is July 9, 2015 at 2:00 p.m. at which time the bids will be opened.
- Heard a report that the Edward French Memorial Scholarship was awarded to Pierce Hill Road student Andrew Hunt and Francestown Road student Christopher Heffernan. The Board was delighted to be able to support these two individuals as they pursue their college plans.

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- Reviewed documentation provided by the Conval Selectmen’s Advisory Committee in preparation of their June 25, 2015 meeting where a proposed change to the Average Daily Membership will be discussed. If the change to the ADM is approved by the School Board the 2014-2015 Conval Payment Schedule will change, resulting in a \$104,054 unbudgeted increase to Bennington’s share.
- Heard a report that the Police Chief is addressing speeding complaints received from South Bennington Road residents.
- Heard a complaint from an Acre Street resident regarding the Library Trustees’ planting of flowers/shrubbery without abutter input. The Board reiterated that the planting has been done within the property boundaries and have been done tastefully to enhance the property. Furthermore, plantings do not require a building permit or setback approvals.
- Briefly discussed signage options to provide residents town-wide information. The Board requested to meet with Valerie Germain to discuss options that are in compliance with the Sign Ordinance.

The Board reviewed, approved, and signed the following documents:

- TDS Franchise Agreement that was approved on November 19, 2014;
- Voted to continue use of the State Inventory of Taxable Property Form for 2016 and signed documentation required by the State;
- Signed Gravel Tax Levies for Map 3, Lot 1 and Map 8, Lot 1;
- Signed a corrected Yield Tax Levy for Map 16, Lot 1;
- Signed the annual Unlicensed Dog Warrant.

The meeting adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Kristie LaPlante
Deputy Administrator