

TOWN OF BENNINGTON

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Minutes of the Meeting – January 23, 2019

Selectmen James Cleary, David Hardwick, Sr., and Mark Mackesy were present as well as Town Administrator Kristie LaPlante. The meeting was called to order at 6:10 p.m.

Highway Department employee Chris Davies met with the Selectmen to discuss the purchase of a heated pressure washer to facilitate effective cleaning of trucks and equipment during the winter months. In 2018, the Selectmen received quotes for installation of a larger water heater at the Highway Garage with costs between \$3,207 and \$3,995. Chris presented the Selectmen with three heated pressure washer model options ranging from \$2,300 to \$7,000. The Selectmen and Highway Department like the features of the \$2,300 model; Chris will check prices with other vendors before purchase to ensure the Town is getting the best value.

Sam Greene, NH DRA Real Estate Appraisal Supervisor for the Western District, Brenda Pabon, NH DRA Real Estate Appraiser, and John Hatfield, Assessor from Commerford, Neider & Perkins (CNP) met with the Selectmen to discuss the 2019 Revaluation. Mr. Greene outlined the process his office will take with reviewing the Town's Current Use, Elderly Exemption, and Veteran's Tax Credits for compliance with State requirements, the process his office takes to review and verify the accuracy of the data collected and submitted by CNP, and their process for achieving property values close to 100% of market value.

The Selectmen shared with Mr. Greene their frustration with the State requirements for valuing Utilities, the lack of Appraisal companies to undertake accurate Utility values, the excessive cost being charged for Utility values, and the discrepancy between values obtained by Utility appraisers and the negotiated and settled values coming out of the Appeals process. Mr. Greene said Utility assessing is a hot topic in the State Legislature and Assessing Standards Board. Changes and standard regulations may be coming through the Legislature but not before the Town's revaluation is complete.

The Town's contract with CNP does not include Utilities assessing; the Town has two contract proposals from Sansoucy to assess Monadnock Paper Mills (\$30,000) and Utilities (\$60,000 if paid in one lump sum or \$74,000 if paid over five years). As a result of the open conversation with Mr. Greene, it became apparent that John Hatfield may be qualified to determine the values through CNP. The Selectmen voted to table acceptance of the Sansoucy contracts and the CNP Revaluation contract and authorized the Town Administrator to renegotiate the Revaluation contract with CNP to include Utilities assessing.

In other business, the Board acted on the following matters:

- Heard a report that the trees at Evergreen Cemetery were removed by Robblee Tree Services on January 10th. The Selectmen authorized payment of the invoice.
- Authorized the Town Administrator to make outreach to two local Building Officials to see if they are interested in the Building Inspector position soon to be open when Dario Carrara resigns.
- Received notice of the Planning Board's approval of Bridge Street Recovery, LLC's Site Plan for Map 13, Lot 14.
- Reviewed the current process for review of Intentions to Cut and heard a report that the Conservation Commission would like to be part of the review and approval process. Because the

approval process is very specific (as defined by Statute), the Selectmen voted not to involve the Conservation Commission.

- Reviewed and approved the Minutes of the Board's December 12, 2018, January 2, 2019, and January 10, 2019 meetings.
- Reviewed and approved the January 17 and 24 Payroll and Accounts Payable Registers.
- Voted not to put Solar Exemptions on the 2019 Town Warrant.

The Selectmen will meet Saturday, January 26, 2019 at 8:00 a.m. to finalize the Warrant, Budget, and Default Budget.

There being no other business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristie LaPlante
Town Administrator