

TOWN OF BENNINGTON

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Minutes of the Meeting – October 22, 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 6:00 p.m.

Town Clerk Debra Belcher met with the Selectmen to continue discussion of her request for the Selectmen to appoint a Deputy Town Clerk. Deb provided the Selectmen with a copy of an email from Colleen McCormack from the Secretary of State Office about Assistant Town Clerks and Elections that seems to contradict the information contained in a presentation conducted at the 2019 Town Clerks Association Conference. Selectman Mark Mackesy reported that the need for a Deputy Town Clerk within the Town's Clerk's Office is apparent and that the Selectmen should waive prior indiscretions. Selectman Mackesy made a motion to appoint Karen Belcher Deputy Town Clerk effective October 24, 2019; the motion was seconded by Selectman Jim Cleary. All three Selectmen voted in favor of the appointment.

The Selectmen discussed the 2019 preliminary property values as established by the Town's assessor and distributed to residents. The Town Administrator reported that townwide the average increase is just shy of 25%. The Town's assessor will hold appeal hearings on October 23, 24, and 25.

In advance of the planned November 13th meeting of the Tri-Town Landfill communities, the Selectmen discussed the current Tri-Town Landfill Agreement and the need to adequately enforce the amount of material each community is allotted per the Agreement. The Selectmen asked the Town Administrator to speak with Town Council to discuss language to effect enforcement. The Selectmen also suggested the Tri-Town group solicit quotes for reclaiming Phase I of the project so each community can plan ahead for their share of the cost.

At 6:29 p.m. a motion as made by Selectman Mackesy to enter in to Nonpublic Session under RSA 91-A:3-II(I) to discuss legal advice provided by legal counsel and seconded by Selectman Cleary; all voted in favor of entering Nonpublic Session. Also present during the Nonpublic Session was Town Administrator Kristie LaPlante. The Selectmen discussed a proposal offer from Eversource for the 2014-2016 property values. No decisions were made. Selectman Mackesy made a motion to reconvene the Public Session; seconded by Selectman Cleary. All voted to reconvene the Public Session at 6:40 p.m.

The Town Administrator reported that as part of the State Budget that passed in September, the Town of Bennington received \$24,755.60 from the State of NH for unrestricted Municipal Aid. The Town must hold a Public Hearing to accept the unanticipated revenues. As part of the same Budget, the Town of Bennington also received an additional \$78,473 in Stabilization Grant funding for education. That offset will show on Conval's 2019 Assessment as part of taxation.

In other action on their Agenda, the Board:

- Heard a report that the Conservation Commission and Local River Committee agree that the Town has exhausted its research requirements to remove the trees that have fallen in the Contoocook River.

- Was provided a copy of the 2020 Budget Requests that went to Department Heads. Department Head budget submissions are due October 29th.
- Reviewed a letter from the Monadnock Paper Mill apologizing for inadvertently omitting the Board of Selectmen and office staff from their 200th Anniversary celebration invitee list. In appreciation, office staff and the Selectmen were gifted 200th Anniversary fleece vests. The Selectmen were appreciative of the acknowledgement and also discussed the immense value other Town Departments provide to the Mill – Highway Department, Fire Department, Police Department, etc.
- Heard a report that the Town of Antrim has increased the cost for their Ambulance Service for 2020 from \$16,000 to \$20,000.
- Briefly discussed the Highway Department makeup and need to integrate the new Road Agent with existing staff and practices.
- Received, with appreciation, a \$350 donation from the Trust Funds of Benevolent for Welfare.
- Reviewed and approved the Minutes of the Board’s October 8, 2019 meeting.
- Reviewed and approved the October 10, October 11, and October 17 Payroll Registers as well as the Accounts Payable Register for October 17, 2019.
- Signed a Cemetery Deed for Lot 6, Row 10; Signed a Building Permit for Map 7, Lot 52; Signed and Intent to Cut for Bible Hill Road; and signed the 2018 Audit confirmation.

At 7:00 p.m. a motion as made by Selectman Mackesy to enter in to Nonpublic Session under RSA 91-A:3-II(I) to discuss legal advice provided by legal counsel and seconded by Selectman Cleary; all voted in favor of entering Nonpublic Session. Also present during the Nonpublic Session was Town Administrator Kristie LaPlante. The Selectmen continued discussion of the proposal offer from Eversource for 2014-2016 appeals. The Selectmen voted not to accept the settlement offer. Selectman Mackesy made a motion to reconvene the Public Session; seconded by Selectman Cleary. All voted to reconvene the Public Session at 7:03 p.m.

There being no other business before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristie LaPlante
Town Administrator