

TOWN OF BENNINGTON

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Minutes of the Meeting – November 13, 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.

Road Agent Hazen Fisk and Highway Foreman Chris Davies met with the Selectmen to discuss staffing and projects:

- A motion was made by Selectman Jim Cleary and seconded by Selectman David Hardwick to hire Matthew Blanchard as the third full-time Highway Department employee. Until the Transfer Station fills the vacancy to be created by Matt's promotion, Matt will continue to cover shifts as needed at the Transfer Station. The Selectmen were clear that they expect Matt to take at least one day off per week while covering both Departments.
- Snow Dump off Acre Street:
 - Bids were received from DH Hardwick (\$1,500) and Francestown Sand & Gravel (\$3,200, including creation of a berm) to level out piles of dirt and other materials on the property to create more space for snow removal operations. Selectmen Cleary and Hardwick voted to accept the Bid from DH Hardwick & Sons; Selectman Hardwick abstained from voting.
 - The Highway Department plans to use wood chips to create a filtration berm closer to the river.
- Advanced Paving has been hired to help finish the shoulder work on Onset Road. The project should be complete later this week.
- The Highway Department will be inventorying all roadway signs in their possession. A "Blind Drive" sign needs to be installed in the area of 16 Bible Hill Road and the Town has received a request for "Caution Horses" signage on North Bennington Road.
- The door lock at the Highway Garage has become temperamental and the locks will soon be re-keyed.

At 6:30 p.m. the Selectmen welcomed Selectmen Bob Edwards and John Robertson and Town Administrator Donna Hanson from the Town of Antrim and Selectmen Brad Howell and Henry Kunhardt from the Town of Francestown for a meeting of the Tri-Town Landfill communities. The group reviewed excavations to date and the terms of the existing Tri-Town Landfill Agreement.

The current Agreement, executed in 1999, estimates the 1,000,000 yards of gravel at the site. The towns of Antrim and Bennington are each entitled to up 400,000 yards of gravel and the Town of Francestown is entitled to up to 200,000 yards of gravel over the life of the agreement; similarly the towns of Antrim and Bennington are each responsible for 40% of costs and the Town of Francestown is responsible for 20% of costs. Francestown Selectman Brad Howell inquired if Francestown were to prematurely remove all of their gravel could they withdraw from the agreement at that point and no longer be responsible for future reclamation, maintenance, and post-closure costs. Antrim and Bennington Selectmen were in agreement that the quantities of gravel are for the life of the Agreement; taking your value early in a contract does not disqualify a community from their continued obligation of shared expenses.

Antrim Selectman John Robertson, Bennington Selectman James Cleary, and Francestown Selectman Henry Kinhardt were appointed to serve on a Committee to review the current Agreement and come back to the full group in the future with any changes or recommendations to the current Agreement.

Chris Davies reported he has talked with the Road Agents from Antrim and Francestown and “No Trespassing” signage will soon be erected at the boundaries of the property and the gate to the excavation pit will be locked when not in use by any of the Tri-Town Highway Departments.

The Town Administrator presented the Board with the Department of Revenue’s proposed 2019 Tax Rate in the amount of \$28.93. The Tax Rate represents a \$1.72 net increase over the 2018 Tax Rate (adjusted for the revaluation) with the major increase coming from Conval (\$1.48 per thousand dollars of assessed value). The Selectmen expressed their frustration with keeping costs low and manageable at the local level but the School District continues to monopolize taxes in Bennington; until the State changes Education Funding the needs of the community will continue to be influenced by Education funding.

In other items on their Agenda, the Selectmen:

- Reviewed and approved the Minutes of the Board’s October 29, 2019 meeting.
- Reviewed and approved the Accounts Payable Registers for November 14, 2019 and the Accounts Payable Registers for November 7 and November 14, 2019.
- Agreed to begin holding weekly and monthly meetings with Department Heads.

There being no other business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristie LaPlante
Town Administrator