

TOWN OF BENNINGTON

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Minutes of the Meeting – November 19, 2019

Selectmen James Cleary, David Hardwick Sr. and Mark Mackesy were present as well as Deputy Administrator Denise French. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

Road Agent Hazen Fisk was in and discussed the following:

- Delivered to the Selectmen his *Weekly / Monthly Proposed Work List*.
- Optimistic team atmosphere amongst the crew.
- Equipment is ready for inclement weather.
- Requested copies of the Winter Parking Ban and the Snow Removal Policy.
- Tri-Town excavation site signage along the berm has been posted.
- As time permits, staff will create an inventory of Highway Department tools/items owned by the Town.

Water/Sewer Commissioners David Beck, Dennis McKenney and Richard Reed were in to discuss the following:

- Finalization of 2020 Water and Sewer billing rates. Based upon detailed documentation the Commissioners recommended, and the Selectmen agreed, a 30% rate hike for both municipal utility rates. The Commissioners and Selectmen unanimously voted to continue providing a fifty-percent reduction in water/sewer quarterly billings to qualified Elderly Exemption property owners of record. As the Town's largest consumer Monadnock Paper Mill Officials will be invited to meet with Town Officials December 10<sup>th</sup> at 6:15 p.m. to discuss the impending 30% rate hikes.
- Antrim Water/Sewer Department's proposed cost increases for services rendered to the Town of Bennington as our contracted Superintendent. Without having received supporting documentation, the group does not support a 70% hourly rate hike for contracted Superintendent services nor the 90% proposed increase for overhead. The Commissioners will seek further information at a planned December 2, 2019 meeting with Antrim Commissioners.
- Sewer Asset Management Plan Development. The Selectmen voted to authorize the Town Administrator to sign the Engineering Contract for Professional Services for the Sewer AMP (Underwood Engineers) as well as the Sewer AMP Technical Assistance Agreement with Southwest Region Planning Commission.
- Bennington Water/Sewer By-laws need review and update by both the Board of Selectmen and the Water/Sewer Commissioners. Among other things Antrim and Bennington need to formalize the Agreement with the Antrim Water/Sewer District for operation and maintenance of Bennington Water/Sewer systems.
- 1983 Contract Use of Antrim Sewage Facilities. There appears to be an error in oversight of the Bennington Force Main which was constructed to Antrim MH#7. It seems that maintenance of this manhole has inadvertently been overlooked by both communities.
- 2007 Agreement for Joint Use of Water Wells. The ten-year term of this existing document expired in 2017.
- Conceptual proposal that could eliminate the Bennington Water/Sewer Commissioners in favor of establishing a Joint Antrim & Bennington Water/Sewer District.

Newly promoted employee Matthew Blanchard met with the Selectmen to revise his employment arrangement:

- Effective November 4<sup>th</sup> Matt was promoted to full-time Highway Department laborer.
- Congratulations on Matt's achievement of acquiring CDL certification.
- Matt's hourly wage was increased to \$16.10 – retroactive back to November 4th; his eligibility for enrollment in health and dental insurances; eligible for employee paid short-term disability; two weeks' vacation; six months' probation.
- Matt agreed to stay on as manager of the Transfer Station until his replacement is up to speed.

The Selectmen took action on the following:

- Unanimously voted to offer the part-time Transfer Station management job to an existing employee. Assuming the employee accepts the promotion, the Board requested immediate advertisement of the associated Transfer Station vacancy.
- Asked that the Administrator review with the Road Agent operations and Transfer Station responsibilities as well as operations and responsibilities at the Tri-Town excavation pit.
- Reviewed the analysis of the 2019 Tax Rate as prepared by the Administrator.
- Received the first draft 2020 Budget for individual review prior to the next Board meeting.
- Heard a report that the Acre Street snow dump will be cleared of debris no later than November 20<sup>th</sup>.

The meeting adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Denise French  
Deputy Town Administrator