

TOWN OF BENNINGTON

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Minutes of the Meeting – November 26, 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 was in and discussed the following:

- There is strong cohesion within the Highway Department and there has been great productivity from Chris Davies and Matt Blanchard.
- Hazen has been researching costs to replace the existing loader while keeping in mind costs associated with replacing the International dump truck in 2022.
- Hazen has spoken with Crotched Mountain Ski Area and they will keep the Town's ditching material from the Onset Road rehabilitation project for their use; the Town will truck out loam and tailings in the spring.
- Advanced Paving was hired to finish the shoulders on Onset Road; that project is now complete.

Transfer Station employee Tom James was in to meet with the Selectmen to discuss his interest in the Transfer Station Manager position. After some discussion, the Selectmen voted to promote Tom James to the Transfer Station Manager effective immediately; the Town will advertise for a Transfer Station Laborer position.

The Selectmen reviewed the 2020 Operating Budget as put forth by the Department Heads. The first submission of \$1,816,762 is \$67,739 more than 2019's Operating Budget, or 3.87%. In their review, the Selectmen made the following changes to the Department Head requests:

- Deputy Town Clerk wages – decrease by \$2,038
- Town Clerk wages – decrease by \$3,053
- Town Clerk Fica/Medicare – decrease by \$417
- Town Clerk Mileage/Expenses – decrease by \$300
- Fire Department Fire Alarm – decrease by \$150
- Water Department Building Repairs/Maintenance – decrease by \$500
- Water Department Electric – decrease by \$1,000
- Sewer Electric – decrease by \$300
- Sewer Heat – decrease by \$50
- Police Department Part-Time Officers – decrease by \$1,630
- Police Department Administrative Assistant – decrease by \$1,500
- Police Department Fica/Medicare – decrease by \$240
- Police Department Training Supplies – decrease by \$1,000
- Police Department Gasoline – decrease by \$1,000
- Fire Department Non-Emergency Wages – decrease by \$1,500
- Fire Department Fica/Medicare – decrease by \$115
- Fire Department Training Courses – decrease by \$1,000
- Fire Department Health – decrease by \$499
- Fire Department Service Contracts – decrease by \$750
- Fire Department Vehicle Fuel – decrease by \$500
- Fire Department Fire Prevention Materials – decrease by \$50
- Medical/Rescue Training – decrease by \$500
- Emergency Management Emergency Wages – decrease by \$499

- Emergency Management Fica/Medicare- decrease by \$39
- Highway Department Gasoline/Oil – decrease by \$2,000
- Solid Waste Household Hazardous Waste Collection – decrease by \$1,250
- Solid Waste General Supplies – decrease by \$300
- Water Department Town of Antrim – decrease by \$4,000
- Water Department Training Courses – decrease by \$500
- Welfare Department Rental Assistance – decrease by \$848
- Conservation Commission Education – decrease by \$500

In reviewing the 2020 Operating Budget, the Selectmen spent considerable time reviewing the Town Clerk Budget. Although the Town Clerk's Office is open for 11 hours a week, the Town Clerk has budgeted weekly office hours of 24 hours per week in the 2020 Budget. Town Administrator Kristie LaPlante reported that throughout 2019 the Town Clerk has documented working 1 ½ to 2 hours every Monday and Friday to go to the bank. The Selectmen asked the Town Administrator to implement a town-wide Deposit Policy that directs all deposits to be made by an employee of the Town Office during their regularly scheduled day rather than have an employee come in outside of their work schedule to go to the bank.

In other items on their Agenda, the Selectmen:

- Reviewed and approved the Minutes of the Board's November 13, 2019 Meeting.
- Reviewed and approved the November 21 and November 27, 2019 Payroll Registers as well as the November 27, 2019 Accounts Payable Register.
- Reviewed an email from Water Commissioner David Beck that seemed to question the Elderly Exemption rates applied to qualifying Water/Sewer customers.
- Heard a report that the Town Administrator and Commerford, Neider, Perkins have agreed to waive fees associated with extra parcels valued during the revaluation and fees for the final values being established one week beyond the contract commitment.
- Reviewed a request from the Town Clerk's Office to pay the Deputy Town Clerk for six hours on Halloween when the Town Clerk closed the office for pedestrian safety. The Selectmen denied the request, citing their policy on office closure that if the Board of Selectmen requests a closure then the time is paid by the Town; if a Department Head closes their office then an employee must use paid time off or they will not get paid for those hours.
- Requested the Town Administrator to schedule the 2020 Capital Reserve Funding Committee meeting with Department Heads.
- Reviewed and approved the Property Tax Warrant for the second issue tax bill for 2019 as well as the Payment in Lieu of Taxes Agreement for Antrim Precinct.
- Reviewed and approved an Abatement of Inventory Penalty for Map 12, Lot 19.
- Reviewed and approved an Intent to Cut for Map 20, Lot 10
- Authorized a \$100 donation to the Bennington Fire Department Association for their annual Breakfast With Santa event.
- Heard a report from Tom James that the roof of the Recycling Shed at the Transfer Station is leaking and the siding is rotting. The Town Administrator will obtain estimates for repair.

There being no other business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristie LaPlante
Town Administrator