

Bennington Board of Selectmen
May 4, 2021 6:00 PM
Meeting Minutes

Present: James Cleary, David Hardwick, David Foster

Selectman Cleary opened the meeting at 6:00 pm.

6:00 – Trustee of Trust Funds

6:30 – Hancock Selectmen – Regionalizing

7:15 – Keith Nason – Emergency Management & JLMC Update

Minutes: April 27, 2021 were approved as written

Financial: Payroll Register – May 6, 2021 was approved

Correspondence: Selectmen reviewed and noted John Plourde, Criminal Background clear

E-mail correspondence was reviewed from K. LaPlante explaining her reasoning for being in the Town Office with Rhonda Davie on Sunday, May 2, 2021. No action taken.

6:00 - Trustees of Trust Funds – Bethany Craig, Mike Munhall and David Parker were all present. Bethany presented the MS-9, reflecting the funds that the Trustees oversee. Discussion followed regarding funds that had been donated and what the plan to use them is going forward. Specifically discussed was the David Glynn fund which currently has \$258,457.87. The purpose of this fund was discussed when they were originally donated. The cost is very expensive to do the renovations that the fund was set up for, which specifies an elevator and/or sprinkler system for the Town Hall.

The VFW being shut down was discussed, Selectmen explained it was shut down as a result of the inspection from the Dept. of Labor, the amount of safety issues are quite expensive. Selectmen have discussed this in the past. Discussion continued regarding re-opening the VFW, Bethany asked if the Boy Scouts could use it for meeting, Chairman Cleary indicated they could in the near future.

Discussion as to contractors who previously had said they could help with renovations continued. Chairman Cleary said he would reach out to them again, and perhaps we could move forward.

Mike Munhall asked what the 5-10 year plan for the masterplan looked like, and asked if it could be reviewed.

Grant possibilities were discussed.

Bethany Craig asked where do we go from here? Selectmen indicated that currently their priorities were the Cupola on the Town Hall, which is leaking and the re-opening of the VFW. Bethany further indicated she would like to see a plan for the David Glynn account.

Munhall asked about the “new direction” and what did it mean exactly. Chairman Cleary reiterated the town is moving in a different direction at this time.

Bethany Craig indicated that the Trustees will go before the Planning Board to see what their thoughts are. Further stating the Trustees would like to utilize the resources that were donated and work towards the goal of renovations.

With nothing further, the Trustees left.

6:30 – Hancock Board of Selectmen & Hancock Town Administrator – Laurie Bryan, Jeff Brown, Kurt Grasset, Jonathan Coin and Bennington Chief of Police, Bret Sullivan were present for this meeting.

Chairman Cleary opened this discussion explaining the invitation from Bennington Board was to discuss the possibility of regionalization between Hancock & Bennington Police Departments. Antrim was also invited, but is not interested. Selectmen discussed the similarities of the communities. Both towns are interested and realize there is a lot of work to put into this before it can actually happen.

Hancock Selectman, Jeff Brown asked what the vision was, Kurt Grasset discussed he thought parts will work and probably other parts may not work. Kurt discussed how in the past the highway departments have worked together and it was successful.

Costs of patrols, administrative costs, benefits etc. all need to be looked into.

Chairman Cleary indicated with similar budgets this could be a cost savings for both communities. Discussion as to how Temple/Greenville have regionalized and what were the anticipated savings vs. actual savings. Everyone, was in agreement there are a lot of variables, but this should be looked at. Bret indicated he would reach out to Chief McTague as he would be a great person to speak to about the regionalizing process and what those towns did to make it a success.

Bret further discussed with Bennington having 19 miles of roads, and it appears the ski area is an issue, it really has not been an issue on the Police side of things, maybe Fire/Rescue but not for the Police.

Selectman Brown asked Chairman Cleary where he sees the savings. Cleary replied the overall budget, maybe needing one more fulltime officer, and one more cruiser.

Chief Sullivan discussed the coverage Bennington currently has, that generally Bennington has 24/7 utilizing call time of course.

Laurie stated that is very similar coverage as to Hancock.

Discussion continued about Temple/Greenfield and led to the Sharon/Peterborough regionalized communities, which Sharon pays a flat fee to Peterborough, there is no PD in Sharon either, no sub-station, any incidents go directly to Peterborough.

Again, everyone agreed this should be looked at, the next meeting Hancock Chief, Horne will be invited to attend, maybe in a week or two after Chief Sullivan has a chance to speak with Chief McTague.

7:05 – Emergency Management Director, Keith Nason – Mr. Nason attended the meeting to update the Selectmen regarding the recent Joint Loss Management Committee and the majority decision that those unable to attend the meeting had been surveyed, those in attendance all determined they were comfortable opening the Town Office to the public, indicating masks are recommended, not mandated, social distance is required. All were in favor of this decision.

Emergency Management discussion followed regarding the Deputy Emergency Director. After discussion Selectmen and Nason determined that Jason Powers, though he has limited time, will be appointed as the Deputy Emergency Director.

Discussion about the LEOP, Hazardous Mitigation Plan and various grants followed. Southwest Regional Planning Commission is a great resource and will help write the plans. There is a grant out for Radio Equipment which should be available by October, as well as a grant for an LED display board.

Regarding the \$150,00.00+/- ARP funds, NHMA is working on a definitive use of the funds which should be available in the next week or two.

Nason discussed the Rhubarb Festival – masks will be optional. Chairman Cleary stated he had spoken with Dennis McClure about the ballfield, McClure has done many improvements, the field looks good. McClure indicated to Cleary he will keep communications open and will come before the Board if anything else is to be done.

Last, discussion Nason mentioned was to identify a location and/or a building to store the barricade followed. No decision was made at this time.

With nothing further Chairman Cleary motioned to adjourn at 7:40 PM. Hardwick seconded the motion, all in favor.

The next Selectmen's Meeting will be Tuesday, May 11, 2021 at 6:00 PM

Respectfully Submitted

Debra Davidson, Interim Town Administrator