

# Bennington Board of Selectmen

December 21, 2021 6:00 PM

## Meeting Minutes

**Present:** James Cleary, David Hardwick, David Foster

**Appointments: 6:00 – Police Chief, Jason LePine –** Chief LePine was before the Board to discuss the proposed 2022 budget. Chief LePine discussed options for a new cruiser, the Purchase Order for a new Tahoe has been submitted, the price is \$45,000, the vehicle maintenance line item has an additional \$8,500.00 for outfitting the new cruiser. The Police Cruiser can be paid for with CRF. Chief LePine discussed part-time officer line item, he has provided the officers with a few options of coverage, they will work it out with the funding that has been proposed.

**6:30 – Conservation Commission - John Manley, Later Mike Munhall –** Mr. Manley was present to discuss the gates on the trestle, he has approached Peter Leishman to open the trestle for use by everyone, it has been presented to the DOT representatives. Members of the Conservation Commission met with Leishman and Lou Parker, DOT Rail Division and presented them with a dossier. The State owns the bridge, extensive historical information was made available, Leishman owns the freight rights, Milford/Bennington Railroad need to update rails and could likely make it open to rails/trails. Selectmen will need to think about if it is open what the goal is to be. Selectmen would like to see it opened to public again. The cost to repair/rebuild is \$619,000+/-, no funds from the town are being requested, it is hopeful that the Build Back Better will possibly have funding opportunity. This is the only bridge in NH with gates, it could be abandoned after 2 years. Further discussion on potential plans for the bridge, nothing is concrete at this time. It is 15.5' from the center of the rail, making it 33' wide.

Selectmen support the exploration of upgrading the rails and would like to get it back to foot traffic, snowmobiles, ATV use at the minimum. Manley will report back to the Board of Selectmen as he learns more about this potential project.

Manley reminded Selectmen that in the spring the Conservation Commission would like the Spirea replanted at the VFW. Selectmen stated they had not forgotten about this.

**6:45 – Road Agent, Matt Blanchard –**

**Shimming Quote -** Matt was present and presented a quote from Advanced Paving, the funds will be encumbered, the price is \$44,100.00, this will allow shim work on N Bennington Road to Gillis to the first pole on Curtis Farm Road. Selectmen signed and dated the quote from Advanced Paving.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Hire for Highway** - Budget discussion followed regarding hiring a 3<sup>rd</sup> person for the highway department, Selectmen told Matt they will be meeting with the Budget Committee before any final decision is made. Matt let the Board know that Curtis Dude helped during the last storm and he was a big help, DJ's truck went down due to a small wire chaffing on the hydraulics, Mike Richardson spent Sunday working on it and fixed it in a very short amount of time.

**Plowing** - Deb Mentioned that a resident from 9 Knightland Rd called with plowing concerns, Matt was provided the phone number of the resident and will call them. Another resident called about a neighbor, this is a civil matter. Selectman Foster was aware of this and has spoken to one of the residents. The matter seems to have been resolved.

**Minutes:** Selectman Cleary motion to accept the minutes of December 14, 2021 as written. Second by Hardwick & Foster. Minutes accepted.

**Financial:** Payroll Register  
A/P Register

**Old Business: Town Office** - there are two quotes for the removal of the bat waste. One is from JP Pest for \$7800, this does not include insulation replacement. One from Matt Harwood, Harwood Painting, \$9350, Harwood quote includes removal/replacement of insulation. Deb will get a price from JP Pest for insulation if they will quote that.

At this time, it is likely the bid will be awarded to Harwood who can start the ceiling in the gym as soon as he has completed the waste removal.

Brief explanation of the damage - Photos of the bat waste show at least 1.5' of waste throughout that needs removal, the insulation is saturated with waste & urine and must be replaced. One way doors need to be installed so bats cannot reenter the area. All exposed holes or cracks that can be, will be fixed and filled to prevent reentry for bats.

**Deliberative Session** – The 1<sup>st</sup> Deliberative Session is scheduled for Wed., February 9, 2022 @ 7:00 pm – Pierce School. ConVal is holding their session on Tuesday, February 8, 2022. The Town will have a snow date of Thursday, February 10, 2022 at 7:00 pm – Pierce School

ConVal is Tuesday, February 8, 2022 at 7:00 pm

**Review/Approve/Signatures:** 2 Veterans Exemption both residents qualify  
Recommittal Warrants for Property Tax  
Abatement – J. Dutil - \$27.31

**Other Business:** Jim Fedolfi had stopped in and spoke with Deb Davidson, he is with the House of Representatives and has reported that at the first of the year, they are voting on Making Hillsborough, Windsor, Antrim and Bennington a district of their own.

7:37 pm - With nothing further, the meeting adjourned at 7:37 pm. The next meeting will be Tuesday, December 28, 2021 at 6:00 pm.