

Bennington Board of Selectmen

July 26, 2022 6:00 PM

Meeting Minutes

Present: Chairman, James Cleary, Tom James, David Foster

Chairman Cleary called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm. The meeting opened with Selectmen discussing the budget with Chief LePine.

Appointments: 6:00 – Chief LePine, budget review – Chief LePine discussed he is putting the box for the new cruiser on hold for now. He does not have an actual price but he is guesstimating \$1500.00 +/- . Selectmen discussed this, it was unanimous they felt he should purchase the box.

Chairman Cleary discussed that fuel is a big concern. Asking Chief LePine to not spend any funds his department could get by without spending.

The cruiser going home every night with Chief LePine and social media posts have been concern's some residents have privately brought to the Selectmen. Chief LePine responded by stating his social media posts are mostly of family and funny. Chief LePine stated nothing is offensive. Selectmen further discussed the perception from residents.

Selectmen went on to discuss the new police cruiser going to Henniker, to the chief's residence, on a daily schedule. Chief LePine discussed the number of calls during call out, there are approximately two per month. Many can be handled via phone calls and there is not a need to return to Bennington. Selectmen clarified the cruiser goes back and forth to Henniker 4x/week and stays at the LePine residence over the weekend, since he is working 4 days/week. LePine discussed each cruiser incurs approximately 17-20K miles per year. Mileage and the price of fuel was discussed. It is 16.1 miles, 1 way from the chief's home to the Town. Chairman Cleary commented this will be revisited closer to Town Meeting. LePine indicated he would be fine with whatever the voters and the Selectboard want, he will work it out. LePine did say, he would like Officer Danforth to keep his car at his house, Danforth lives in Bennington. He further noted that the Tahoe gets approximately 17 mpg, while the Ford gets approximately 15 mpg. Selectmen agree with Officer Danforth keeping his car at his home.

Continuing with the budget review, Chief LePine noted that the gas line is already over, however the budget should be under on several items. Chief LePine thinks the overall budget will be fine. Chief LePine explained the line item of special detail, is not over, the revenue side makes it a wash. Uniforms will be down next year, admin phone will also be down. Education & Training will be up for the next year in an effort to allow Officer Danforth to get up to speed. Chief LePine explained the IT support/maintenance was never included in the police budget, IT will be broken out to each department, this was not identified prior to town meeting. Going forward each department will see IT support/maintenance in their budgets.

Selectmen thanked Chief LePine, and further reminded him to get a price on the box for the back of the new cruiser.

6:45 – Tax Collector, Catherine McGillicuddy – Deeding of properties – Tax Collector discussed there are properties back to 2017, some of which the deeding process could begin. Several of the property owners have met with the Tax Collector and have made agreements for payment of the back taxes, however, those that have not may be deeded are being considered for deeding. Selectmen indicated they were not aware of some of the further back taxes owed and encouraged contacting Town Counsel.

Minutes: Chairman Cleary made the motion to accept the minutes of July 12, 2022 as written. Seconded by Selectman James. Minutes accepted

Financial: Selectmen signed the Payroll and A/P Registers for weeks of 7/28/22FD; 7/14/22 7/21/22; 7/28/22

Old Business:

Fire Truck: Selectman/Fire Chief David Foster followed up with some information regarding a lease/purchase of a new Fire Truck. He suggested putting \$250,000 from the CRF as a down payment and then he presented various options for payments of 5-year, 10-year and 20-year. The Town Administrator, Deb Davidson explained what Bennington Department of Revenue Auditor, Jamie Dow explained to her about this process. Davidson also presented sample warrant articles, and RSA's for the Board to review. The purchase of a fire truck had not been noticed to the voters, it cannot be purchased at this time if any funding, other than our CRF is required. The Town has approximately \$400,000+ in the Fire Truck CRF, so to enter into an agreement isn't feasible at this time. Selectman Foster asked for Jamie Dow's phone number, he would like to discuss this with her directly.

New Business:

Town Well: Chairman Cleary reported to the other board members the town well is currently on the Antrim water. The well pump in Bennington is being worked on, the cost to fix this will be paid via the appropriate CRF. The cost is approximately \$20,000 for the repair, this is an emergency and must be addressed.

Sawyer Field: A resident requested to park cars at Sawyer Field for his wedding in October. After discussion, Selectmen approved this request. The resident will be notified and the concerns that were brought up will be discussed.

Clear Gov: A sales representative approached the town and discussed this budget program, Clear Gov. The Town Administrator discussed the program and the cost. Though the program seems like a great program, at this time, it is not feasible to purchase.

Electrical Supplier: With the cost of electricity increasing, prices for a new electrical supplier will be researched.

Fuel bid: RFP for Propane & Heating Fuel has been put out to bid, bids are expected to be returned on or before August 23, 2022. Bids will be reviewed at Selectmen's meeting on August 23.

Dept. Head Updates:

Water & Sewer bylaws: Selectmen were presented with updated Water & Sewer bylaws.

Review/Approve/Signatures:

- Building Permits – Bennington Rt 202, LLC; Harley Miller; Michael & Jane Butler; Hautanen
- Updated E9-1-1 Liaison data operations form

Miscellaneous:

Power at Sawyer Park – The park is going to be rented in August for a family gathering, the person renting asked about the power. Selectman James will get together with the representative of the family and explain the power and how it all works.

Cemetery Trustees – Selectmen have been invited to the next Trustee meeting, August 9, 6:45pm. Selectman Foster has another commitment, Selectman James and Chairman Cleary will try to make it.

Memorial Statute – Selectmen discussed getting prices for cleaning the statute across from Pierce Elementary School. This will be available for the next meeting.

Employee Reviews – The Select board need to do employment reviews for Matt, Deb & Jason, this will be scheduled for the next meeting.

Greenfield/Bennington Town Line – Chairman Cleary discussed the town line and options for resolving the questionable line. Selectmen will contact Greenfield Selectmen to discuss this further.

With nothing further, Chairman Cleary adjourned the meeting at 8:20 pm. Seconded by Selectman James.

The next scheduled meeting will be on Tuesday, August 9, 2022 at 6:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra Davidson, Town Administrator