

**Bennington Board of Selectmen**  
**August 23, 2022 6:00 PM**  
**Meeting Minutes**

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

Chairman Cleary called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

**Appointments:**

**6:05 – Keith Nason** – Keith was before the Selectboard to discuss allowing the Papermill the use of the new LED message board. This was purchased through a Homeland Security grant, Nason stated he can assure it is a Homeland Security matter in that, if the Mill shuts down it would become a problem for the Town of Bennington. Nason believes this is an appropriate use of the signage and will work for an appropriate location to place the sign.

Keith and Selectmen discussed the trestle and trucks getting stuck in the trestle. We need to see about getting additional signage, Spanish and French, maybe larger, fluorescent signage, enforcement of fines, something painted on the road were all options discussions. The Papermill needs to hold truckers accountable. GPS is not helpful, it sends truckers through the trestle. This is a multiple weekly occurrence. Deb was instructed to contact the DOT again, call the bridge bureau also. Removal of the trestle was discussed, that would be the best option. John Manley has been talking with Annie Kuster, this is a huge liability, trucks have been getting stuck regularly for 10+ years.

One last thing, Keith Nason stated h e has more PPE supplies, gloves, masks, gowns, wipes and hand sanitizer.

**6:30 – Matt Blanchard – Road Agent** – In accordance with RSA 91A:3 II motion by Chairman Cleary to enter into a non-public session for a personnel matter. Seconded by Selectmen Foster & James. All in favor.

**7:02 pm** motion by Chairman Cleary to come out of non-public. Seconded by Selectmen Foster & James. All in favor.

**Decision:** With a satisfactory review, probation being lifted for Matt Blanchard, his hourly wage will be increased to \$25.00 per hour.

Matt discussed work that has being done, the culvert on Rogers Road is done. There are three culverts that still need replacing, two on Old Greenfield Road and one on the Birches of Bennington road.

Matt discussed the budget and that he would like to purchase a leaf pack, the freightliner needs front springs and a few other minor maintenance issues need to be done on the vehicle. Selectman Foster explained how the budget is a bottom line budget and that if these maintenance issues need addressing, they should be addressed.

Salt will be delivered in October, the winter sand is not made yet. Road side mowing is going to begin soon.

Matt and Selectmen discussed the waste oil removal, Clean Harbor was here this week and tested the oil. Selectman Foster discussed if installation of a waste oil burner has ever been considered? Discussion followed as far as what options for this could be. Everyone was in agreement, this is a great idea and should be looked into.

Nothing further, Selectmen thanked Matt for coming in.

**Minutes:** Chairman Cleary made the motion to accept the minutes of August 9, 2022 as written. Seconded by Selectman James.

**Financial:** Selectmen approved Payroll Registers for 8/18/2022 and 8/25/2022 and the Accounts Payable register for 8/10/2022

**New Business:**

- **Town Building Usage** - Selectmen discussed using the Gymnasium and the VFW on a more regular basis. Selectman James discussed utilizing the gymnasium for music in the winter months and/or in the event of rain. After discussion this is a good use of the space, however the capacity limit would be no more than 49 people for fire safety. The Rhubarb & Music committee's have reserved the VFW through the end of 2022 as their meeting venue.
- **Oil/Propane bids** – Selectmen reviewed two oil/propane bids that were submitted for the 2022/2023 heating season. The bids were comparable. Selectmen asked Town Administrator to contact the current provider and determine if they could offer a slightly better price. No decision as to which company will be used was made at this time. This will be revisited at the next Selectmen's Meeting, September 6, 2022.

**Review/Approve/Signatures:** Selectmen signed the Desaulnier/town deed, this will be recorded as soon as possible.

**Miscellaneous:**

- **Public Hearing** – Selectmen discussed holding a Public Hearing to accept unanticipated funds. The Public Hearing will be held on September 6, 2022 at 6:00 pm. At the regularly scheduled Selectmen's Meeting.

- **Release of Claims** -Selectmen reviewed and discussed the recent release of claims for the Rymes insurance claim. Discussion regarding Town Counsel's reply followed. Town Administrator will contact Primex and discuss the concerns regarding the release with Amy Poole and report back to the Selectmen.
- **Cleaning of Memorial Statute** – Selectmen discussed the cleaning of the memorial statute. A resident has discussed with the office and one of the selectmen, his cleaning the memorial. No decision was made at this time.
- **Fire Truck Purchase** – Selectman Foster discussed the possibility of holding a special town meeting or waiting until March to put the fire truck purchase on the warrant. Discussion followed.

Chairman Cleary reported to the other board members that the town is currently at a PP Code #9 - Bennington being a part/time fire department is a huge factor in this rating. This will not affect homowner's insurance ratings or policies. There is nothing that says a town MUST replace fire trucks. It is a recommendation only. Not purchasing a firetruck will not affect the Town or homeowners. Cleary stated we need to be careful, residents are feeling the economic status.

Foster reiterated, he was just wondering if we should do a Special Town Meeting now or wait for March requesting to exceed the amount in our CRF. Foster indicated that NFPA recommends purchasing a new truck every 25 years. Cleary disagrees with this recommendation, indicating that NFPA cannot mandate expenditures of any money and further reiterating, taxpayers may not have the ability to pay this at this time.

After a brief discussion, selectmen would like to meet with the Budget Committee and wait until March. It was suggested to get the Budget Committee to meet with the Board of Selectmen as soon as possible.

With nothing further, Chairman Cleary adjourned the meeting at 8:05 pm. The next scheduled Selectmen's meeting will be on Tuesday, September 6, 2022 at 6:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Debra Davidson, Town Administrator