

Bennington Board of Selectmen
Tuesday, June 14, 2022 6:06 PM
Meeting Minutes

Present: James Cleary, David Foster, Thomas James

Appointments:

6:25 – Police Chief, Jason LePine – LePine was before the Board to ask permission to purchase a trunk organization kit. Though the line item is overspent at this time because of the unexpected cost of radios, LePine indicated he did receive more than expected for the sale of the old cruiser. Selectmen asked the cost of the trunk organizer, which LePine indicated is approximately \$1,500.00. Brief discussion followed regarding the trunk organization, safety and purchase of this item.

Motion by Chairman Cleary to authorize the purchase of a security drawer for the Tahoe for a cost of \$1,500.00. Seconded by Selectmen James & Foster. All in favor.

6:30 – Dennis McClure – Mr. McClure discussed that he has spoken with Brenda Gibbons and has information regarding the history of Sawyer field. A brief history, Sawyer Memorial Field has two sections – the memorial section with the stones and playground and the ballfield.

Representing the men’s soft pitch, Dennis indicated the plastic fencing they are using doesn’t work. They asked for a fence in left field and have not received a reply if they can install it. Selectmen said they would not approve a fence this year.

Mr. McClure expressed his dis-satisfaction with the farmers market.

Chairman Cleary told McClure, the Board has discussed this with the Town Attorney. The attorney advised based on the recorded deed, the field is being used appropriately and the Board is not going to continue to discuss it weekly. They have made their decision and the Farmers Market will continue on Tuesday, the MSP can use the field M, W and Th.

McClure read several pages from a document he acquired from the Historical Society. He continued to express his thoughts about how he feels Sawyer Field is not being treated appropriately.

Chairman Cleary reiterated the advice from the Town Attorney stating the field is being appropriately utilized. As a result of all the controversy, contacting the insurance carrier and an inspection there is a lengthy report of improvements that should be made to the playground.

The field is fine, it is what the Town of Bennington offers, the playground will have the improvements made though.

6:45 – Recreation Committee Members , Chad Bullard, Jessie Crews & Bethany Craig – Mr. Bullard stated he moved to town in 2019, Sawyer Field was not being used at that time. He is hopeful that everyone can work together and that everyone can benefit from the use of the field, and he stated there are many residents that have good ideas for the use of the space.

Chairman Cleary mentioned the town does not charge to use the field. Everyone should work together.

Bethany Craig said she wanted to address the accusation that the pitcher mound was destroyed. Bethany asked it be removed on Wednesday and it wasn't. Bethany discussed it was removed on Wednesday by volunteers. The holes did get filled in, someone hurt their ankle and it was suggested the holes be filled in. Bethany stated she had no knowledge of anything being destroyed. She did mention MSP leaves rakes and fencing often by the fence and children do play with them. Bethany mentioned it would be in the town's best interest if they were removed for safety reasons. Discussion followed.

Recreation Committee member, Jessie Crews asked if there was an inventory of town property stating the uses of each property, who can use the properties, etc. Town Administrator replied she hasn't found something like this, but it would be a great inventory to have. The office will work on getting a list together.

Selectman Foster asked the Recreation Committee Members if they knew what was going to happen to the old playground equipment at Pierce Elementary School? The school will be contacted regarding this.

Selectmen informed Bethany they received a letter from one of the Rhubarb Festival Volunteers. They said they could go into non-public to discuss it, Bethany said she didn't mind discussing it in public. A volunteer wrote a letter expressing she felt that Bethany was rude to her at the festival. Husband has an emotional support dog and was asked to leave. Bethany said the letter was not true, and that she did ask the person to leave and further stated she was very disappointed that a volunteer would behave like this. The difference between emotional support vs. service pets was discussed. Discussion followed. Selectmen will reach out to the person who wrote the letter to discuss further. No action taken at this time.

Bethany informed the Board 4-H has reserved the Gazebo for Thursday, June 23 between 5:00 – 8:00 pm. For the Midsummers Eve Celebration.

Minutes: Motion by Chairman Cleary to accept the minutes of 05/31/22 as written. Seconded by Selectmen James and Foster.

Financial: Selectmen approved the Payroll Manifest for 6/9/22, and the Accounts Payable Manifests for 6/2/22; 6/9/22

Old Business:

- **Sawyer Field** – Selectmen discussed having a one-way sign at Sawyer Field. Discussion followed, this will be on the agenda for the next meeting.
- **Primex Report** - Selectmen reviewed a playground assessment from Primex. Discussion as to options for the playground, grants, equipment and more followed. No decisions at this time.
- **Letter from resident** - Selectmen reviewed a letter from Dennis McClure regarding Sawyer Field, no decisions were made.
- **Letter from Rhubarb Festival Volunteer** – Selectmen read a letter from a rhubarb festival volunteer. They discussed the letter with Bethany, they would like to invite the author of the letter to meet with them to discuss this further.
- **E-mails** - E-mails from Recreation Committee were reviewed. No decisions were made.
- **Tri-Town re-bed** - The re-bed at the Desauliner property was completed this week, the engineers will be back next week to take samples.
- **Cupola** - Selectmen asked when the Cupola would be started. Town Administrator, Deb Davidson reported Matt Harwood said he would be available August/September. They would like to have Matt look at the well house building on Bible Hill Rd.

New Business:

- **Concern** - Resident, Betty Coffin Brooks reported the Bible Hill Road Wellhouse roof needs replacement and the grass needs cutting. She asked that the Selectboard be told. Discussion followed. Selectmen would like Matt Harwood to look at the building and give us his recommendations.
- **NHGFOA** – Town Administrator will be attending a NHGFOA class in Concord tomorrow, June 22, and June 29 & 30
- **2022/2023 Heating Season** - Waiting for prices for 2022/2023 oil season from Ciardelli – Ciardelli has offered a .30/gallon below market value to town employees, if employees are interested.
- **Vacation Request** – Town Administrator, Deb Davidson requested vacation the week of July 10 – BOS meeting schedule was discussed; no decision was made about the Selectmen’s Meeting at this time. Vacation request was approved.

- **ARPA Grant** – Selectmen Foster reported the Fire Department was approved for part of the grant they applied for. They were approved for the portion that would replace gear and purchase an ID maker. They were not approved for the building addition though.

Items for signature:

- **Abatements:** multiple yield tax abatements (error on original billings due to incorrect worksheet calculation)
- **Certified Yield Tax Assessments & billings -**
- **Building Permit - M 21 L 6 (small shed)**

With nothing further, Chairman Cleary made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 pm. The next scheduled Selectmen’s Meeting is Tuesday, June 28, 2022 at 6:00 pm. Selectmen James & Foster seconded the motion.

Respectfully Submitted,

Debra Davidson, Town Administrator