

Bennington Board of Selectmen
November 1, 2022 6:00 PM
Meeting Minutes

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

Chairman Cleary opened the meeting at 6:02 pm.

Appointments:

6:02 PM – Road Agent, Matt Blanchard – Mr. Blanchard presented the Board of Selectmen with numbers for the purchase of a mid-sized truck, based on trading in the orange 1-Ton Freightliner. The truck Blanchard is looking at is smaller than the dump but will do as much work. It is just as versatile as the dump truck, minus the dump body.

Blanchard was questioned as to why the town had two dump trucks. Blanchard stated he did not know. The 1-ton sits more often than not, especially with only a two-man crew.

Chairman Cleary asked when is the dump supposed to be swapped out? Blanchard was not sure, he thought in the next year or two.

Blanchard stated the truck he is looking at is a 2023 International CV515, the cost is \$73,000 for the truck and an additional \$70,000+/- to outfit the truck. The additional amenities for the truck are a plow, wing, sander and built in hydraulics. Blanchard estimates between \$30,000-\$90,000, for a trade in for the 1-Ton. Discussion regarding the additional Block Grant funds and/or CRF could be used for payment, having no impact on taxpayers.

Blanchard discussed the orange truck was not built well. When the truck is loaded, it can not get out of its own way. Same when plowing with it, it can barely make it up a small hill if it is slippery out. The CV515 would have hydraulics, making it a much more efficient vehicle.

Chairman Cleary asked if we could get rid of the International now? Blanchard said he would rather wait to see what will offered if traded in. He further stated, he would like to have the revenue from the sale of the Freightliner go into the CRF. The backhoe is scheduled to be replaced in the next year or two, the proceeds would help with the CRF.

Selectman James asked Blanchard if there was something wrong with the emergency brake on the backhoe? Blanchard stated the they had been working on it. Brief discussion followed. No action is needed at this time.

Lastly, Selectman James asked if the bathroom at the DPW can be repaired, it is having some issues with the inside of the tank. Blanchard indicated he and DJ will get it taken care of.

Selectman Foster suggested checking on air brakes vs. hydraulic. Blanchard said he will look into that option and get prices.

Motion by Chairman Cleary to authorize Road Agent, Matt Blanchard to enter into a contract for the purpose of purchasing a 2023 CV515 International truck. The cost of the truck is not to exceed \$73,000 and extras not to exceed \$74,000. Seconded by Selectman Foster. No further discussion. Voted unanimously in favor.

Other DPW matters: Blanchard reported there has been no interest in the part-time position. Sand is already processed for winter. Salt is coming in the next week. Discussion of the Tri-Town Pit followed.

Blanchard thanked the Selectboard for the support at this time.

6:30- Bethany & Jim Craig – Chairman Cleary thanked Bethany & Jim for all they have done over the years. Cleary continued with he understood they were resigning as Co-Chairs of the Bennington Recreation Committee and asked if they wanted to discuss their resignation.

Bethany expressed they had a hard year, they did not feel they were supported by the office or the Board of Selectmen. They will continue to be on the recreation committee, but they will not be the co-chair or donate as much as they have in the past. Bethany had some concerns, she would like to know the number of ball players that live in Bennington vs. out of town. She added charging for the use of the field should be considered, there are fees the taxpayers cover and she feels the users of the field should cover those costs, not taxpayers.

Chairman Cleary stated that they (Bethany & Jim) were supported by the office and the Board of Selectmen. Cleary further stated Sawyer field is a multi-purpose field, all activities will continue to be allowed on the field.

Town Administrator, Deb Davidson asked to reply to Bethany, stating that the office and Selectboard have supported the Recreation Committee, they have treated everyone equally. There was a policy and contract created for everyone to use, insurance policy requirement put into place and it is being reviewed with consideration of incorporating user fees into the use of the field.

Selectmen continued to discuss policy, insurance, fees and more with Bethany & Jim. They reiterated to Bethany and Jim how much they appreciated everything that they have done over

the years and feel strongly the Board of Selectmen and the office staff have always supported the recreation committee and Bethany and Jim as well.

7:00 – Steve Roy – Resident Steve Roy dropped off a veteran exemption technical information document. The veteran exemptions have recently been updated by the State RSA's and Mr. Roy wanted the Board of Selectmen to be aware of this change. Selectmen thanked him for his information.

7:30 – Emergency Management Director, Keith Nason – Mr. Nason was before the Board of Selectmen to request use of the equipment CRF. Five or six years ago, the Emergency Management Services received a warm zone grant, they would like to get new body armor, which has a 10-year life span and new helmets, which have a 5-year life span. Nason would like to replace the current 6 sets. This is equipment that could be used in the event of an active shooter event, you must be certified to use the equipment, the police department can also use this. Certification is every 5 years. Nason has found the body armor at a 61% discount in Florida. There is a 60-day lead time. Selectmen authorized this purchase. Nason will get the 6 units ordered as soon as possible.

Minutes: Chairman Cleary accepted the October 18, 2022 minutes as written. Seconded by Selectman James.

Financial: Selectmen signed the Payroll Register for the week ending 10/27/22; Selectmen signed the A/P Registers for the weeks of 10/20/22; 10/27/22

Old Business:

Energy costs – The Town Administrator signed the contract with Constellation and locked in with Constellation at .15 cents/kwh, this will provide the electricity supplier to the Town.

DOT/Trestle – Town Administrator provided the Selectmen with an update from Charles Corliss from the NH DOT with regards to the Trestle. Options were discussed and action that is being taken by the NHDOT was discussed. Selectmen support the change of integrating the rails into the parks system and further identifying the vertical concerns the town has. Mr. Corliss will be notified of this and appropriate action will be taken. Also, the NHDOT has spoken with Mr. Verney asking that the Papermill be more diligent with informing their delivery trucks to use the proper transit means, accessing the papermill via 202.

New Business: Standard Power – service reimbursement agreement for support of the hydro plant was reviewed and signed by the Chairman of the Board of Selectmen. The Standard Power contract will authorize Devon Atwell, Energy Consultant for Standard Power to monitor the towns electrical use, and in turn will reimburse the Town of Bennington .5/kwh every quarter.

Dept. Head Updates: DPW – weekly reports were reviewed

Other: Selectmen discussed possible warrant articles. All were tabled at this time. Though, Keno will be a warrant article.

The office staff will be working on cleaning and organizing the 3rd floor, the foyer and the file room. This will be an ongoing project until it is complete. The recreation committee will be provided an area to store things on the 3rd floor, as well as in the basement.

Review/Approve/Signatures:

Draft Audit report was discussed. No action or signatures were needed at this time. Town Administrator reported to the Board that the Auditor, Kyle Gringas will be in the office for training on Thursday, November 10. The office will be closed to the public for training until noon.

With nothing further Chairman Cleary adjourned the meeting at 8:00 pm. The next selectmen's meeting will be Tuesday, November 15, 2022 at 6:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra Davidson, Town Administrator