

Bennington Board of Selectmen

June 19, 2023 6:00 PM

Meeting Minutes

Present: Chairman, James Cleary, Tom James, Tony Parisi

Appointments:

6:15 – Ben Mowatt & Keith McLellan – Scenic Rail Explorers, LLC

Mr. Mowatt & Mr. McLellan were present to discuss a plan they have and how they would like to rent the Depot to implement a Rails/Trails programs. The Scenic Rail Explorers, LLC is a NH LLC, promoting rail bike tourism and would like to offer scenic rail tours in Bennington, utilizing the Depot as a starting point. They are anticipating between 35-40 people, they would likely store the equipment on the tracks or on the side of the rails.

They are currently working with the State of NH, Bureau of Rails, Peter Leishman and the Federal Railroad Administration. They all need to approve the project before moving forward.

Signage and flags would be provided. Schedule was discussed, parking was discussed. Monthly rent vs. improvements to the building was discussed.

Selectmen will send this information to town counsel for advisement.

Selectmen gave Mr. Mowatt the key to the Depot and he was going to go look at the building and return to discuss with the Selectmen.

7:00 Mr. Mowatt returned, he and Mr. McLellan like the space, they have ideas for improvements. Suggested the town and the SRE, LLC contact their attorneys and get back together in a couple weeks to discuss the possibility of this project moving forward.

6:30 – Chief LePine –

New Hire - Chief LePine updated the Board of Selectmen on one potential new hire and further discussed two new potential applicants.

Deadline for part-time police academy was discussed. If the deadline is missed, the full-time academy would be the only option. Selectmen are not supportive of the full-time academy at this time, the funds are not in the budget for this expense. The candidate would have to wait until the next part-time academy is offered.

Detail Rate – Chief LePine discussed detail rates. Discussion followed. Selectmen support increasing the detail rate to \$90.00/hour which is \$55.00 to the officer \$35.00 to the Town.

6:50 pm - In accordance with RSA 91A-3:II (C) Motion by Chairman Cleary to enter into a non-public session. Seconded by Selectmen James & Parisi.

6:57 pm – Motion by Chairman Cleary to come out of non-public session. Seconded by Selectmen James & Parisi.

No decision was made

Minutes: June 2, 2023; June 5, 2023 minutes were accepted as written

Financial: Selectmen signed the A/P and Payroll Registers for the weeks of June 8, 2023, June 15, 2023

Other:

Whittemore Beach –

- Phone lines, possible work order – Town Administrator has spoken to Jim Craig and discussed Eversource is switching to fiber optics. To hook the Whittemore Beach shed up to this would be very expensive. It would require a 110 amp outlet and hundreds of feet of wire. Discussion followed. It was decided if Eversource will do the wire, at no cost to the Town, it is the only feasible way this project could move forward.
- Roadway – Discussion followed regarding the need for some work on the roadway to Whittemore Beach. Being a State Boat launch and owned by the State, Town Administrator will contact the State to see if they will address the repairs.
- Items to be addressed – Discussion followed, many of these items were addressed last week, the remainder of the items will be sent to Matt & DJ for completion.

weed wack both sides of the road

leaf blow debris & sticks into the woods
pick up brush behind the shed
blow & clean leaves along fence
trim & cut brush on or over hanging fence
cut over hang branches with pole saw
cut up tree at the top of road, remove & dispose of it

- Snakes – reported there have been snakes seen at the beach. State Fish & Game will be notified.

Bats – Town Administrator reported that JP Pest will be at the office June 20, 2023 between 9:00 am – 3:00 pm to assess the situation.

Vacation Request – Town Administrator requested vacation time. Selectmen approved this request.

Relocation of pipes for sprinkler system – Discussion followed regarding the need to relocate the pipes for the sprinkler system. Selectmen approved attaching them to the ceiling of the gymnasium. Disturbance of the bats is not allowed at this time.

Paint colors – elevator shaft – walls etc. – Selectmen encouraged speaking with the Historical Society.

TDS – Proposal for a new phone system was discussed. The proposal was executed and will move forward, unless some unanticipated problem is discovered that would not allow moving forward to take place.

Lifeguard Schedule – Policies on floaties, lifejackets for kids (coastguard approved only); WSI Course, swim lessons? Selectmen discussed floaties policies, they will support coast guard approved lifejackets. Water Safety Instructor Course would be approved if it is free, allowing for swimming lessons to possibly be offered when Lifeguard Gregory LeBlanc is certified.

Sawyer Park – Dennis McLure stopped in and spoke with the Town Administrator about the following items.

- **Loam** – Mr. McLure reported that though the field has had some work, it still needs more loam and wondered if the Selectmen would consider dumping a truck load of loam to be used. Mr. McLure had indicated he would fix the field, the memorial rock and anywhere else that needs additional loam. Discussion followed. No decision at this time.
- **Stage** – Not happy with location that has been decided for the stage, better than where it is currently located but still not safe. Mr. McLure has suggestions as to what could be done with the Stage. Selectmen understood the concerns however, the stage will stay as Selectmen originally have decided.
- **Parking** – Options for parking were discussed. No decisions at this time. Chairman Cleary will report back at the next meeting. Selectmen discussed the parking at Sawyer Field during the Rhubarb Festival, the Town Safety Coordinator indicated it was safer than it has ever been.
- **Fence** – Mr. McLure discussed with the Town Administrator that he would like to see a fence installed which would honor veterans from Bennington. Going back as far as possible. Selectmen are open to this suggestion, however they are not there yet.

NH Charitable Foundation – Town Administrator reported a donation of \$2500.00 was received from the NH Charitable Foundation for the purpose of purchasing trees. A tree at the town office will be purchased, two trees for the fire department, a tree for Newhall Field and flowers.

7:45 pm – in accordance with RSA 91A-3II (C) motion by Chairman Cleary to enter into a non-public session. Seconded by Selectmen James & Parisi.

8:00 pm – motion by Chairman Cleary to come out of the non-public session. Seconded by Selectmen James & Parisi.

With nothing further Chairman Cleary adjourned the meeting at 8:05 pm. The next Selectmen’s Meeting will be scheduled for Monday, July 3, 2023 at 6:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra Davidson, Town Administrator

