

Bennington Board of Selectmen
September 11, 2023
Meeting Minutes

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

Chairman Cleary opened the meeting at 6:00 pm.

Appointments: There were no appointments scheduled for this meeting, however, VFW members Jim Creighton and Brian Quinn stopped in to talk to the Selectmen.

As a legislative update, Mr. Creighton updated Selectmen on a bill that he brought to the house regarding Boater registration rules. It is being reviewed and still needs to be voted upon. It is vital to towns that this bill pass or towns could lose up to 5 million dollars of Fish & Game funds that would be used for search and rescue and also NHDES risks losing funds for milfoil and other invasive species that are infiltrating into the waters, causing problems. It would be an additional \$3.00 to register boats. Brief discussion followed. Selectmen thanked Mr. Creighton for updating them on this bill.

Mr. Creighton introduced Mr. Quinn as a very energetic member of the VFW. He would like to see the building used more frequently by veterans, they are working on reviving the veteran spirit.

- **Pancake Breakfast** – The VFW Post recently hosted a Pancake Breakfast at the VFW, it was a very successful event. Approximately 60 people attended. They would like to do quarterly breakfasts offered to veterans. The next one is scheduled for November 11, 2023. There have been three new members since the last breakfast, the priority is veterans, with the Bennington community being second.
- **Christmas for Bennington Families** – The VFW Post always likes to sponsor a family at Christmas and would like to continue with this tradition.
- **VFW Usage** – The VFW has one business meeting per month. They hold events on Saturdays and always hold a Turkey raffle the Thursday before Thanksgiving. Other organizations do use the building on a regular basis such as, Conservation Commission and Girl Scouts. Residents utilize the building for birthday parties, funerals, celebration of life, baby showers and it is also ear marked as an

emergency shelter if needed. Discussion followed regarding renovations needed to the building and costs for renovations. Tree removal near the VFW was discussed, it will be researched who actually owns the trees and Mr. Creighton will contact the owner. The trees will damage the roof of the VFW if they fall.

- **Key to Storage** – the key to the storage area is missing. This is where a lot of the memorabilia is stored and the key needs to be located and/or the lock needs rekeying.
- **Upgrades** – Upgrades to the building were discussed, as well as a timeline, changes to the building and options for these changes were discussed.

Discussion continued, with Selectmen’s approval for a completion date in May or June as the goal for renovations.

Action items:

- Research who owns the land near the VFW with hanging trees
- Get P. Leishman information to Jim Creighton
- Price mechanical room – mini splits or new propane
- Price kitchen
- Price unisex bathroom
- Find key or rekey storage for VFW items

Minutes: Chairman Cleary motioned to accept the minutes of August 21, 2023 as written. Seconded by Selectman Parisi. Selectman James abstained as he was absent for the previous meeting.

Financial: Payroll Registers and A/P Registers for weeks 8/ 24, 8/31, 9/4, 9/5 & 9/7 were signed by the Selectmen.

Other:

- **Conval** – Town Administrator notified Selectmen of a Public Hearing to discuss district configuration and possible reconfiguration – Scheduled for October 2, 2023 @7:00 pm, Pierce Elementary School.

- **Handi-cap ramp update** – The current ramp has been updated to allow access into the building. This will be a temporary means of access until an engineered design can be completed for the front ramp.
- **Cupola update** – Matt Harwood has been making progress on the Cupola, weather has been somewhat cooperative.
- **Scenic Rail Road Contract Update for review** – At this time, this will be put on hold. Town Administrator to notify the respective people.
- **Cemetery Rules & Regulations** – Selectmen discussed this. The updated rules and regulations look good. The only addition could be putting the price for lots and cornerstone prices in the policy.
- **NHDES** – Monadnock Papermill Operating Permit for review, will be filed in the MPM property file.
- **Evergreen Cemetery** – Selectman James discussed there are trees that need to be removed towards the back of the cemetery. It was mentioned that the Cemetery Trustees are meeting on August 12, 2023 at 6:30 pm, Selectman James will try to attend.

Signatures:

- **Audit Representation Letter** – Signed by Selectboard
- **Eversource Pole License petition** – Signed by Chairman
- **A-5 & CU-18** – Signed by Selectboard
- **Vacation Request** – 9/14 -9/24 – Vacation was approved.

Selectman James wanted a minute to discuss a few items with the Board.

- **Potential Lawsuit** – Selectman James reported that a resident has expressed he is considering suing the town. James wanted to know how the Selectmen would handle it if this resident comes to a meeting. Discussion followed. Town Administrator was instructed to ask Town Counsel the best way to handle this situation.
- **Fire Dept.** – Selectman James inquired as to the status of the Fire Truck and the rescue truck? No update, Town Administrator will ask the Fire and Rescue Chiefs and report back.

- **Police Signage** – Selectman James indicated that he would like to see a lighted sign for the Police, he reported that residents have stated they don't know where the police department is.
- **Stage** – Selectman James discussed he noticed the stage has been moved but he is concerned that it won't last where it is without a back put on it. The snow will cause excessive damage. Selectmen discussed this, and Chairman Cleary reminded Selectman James all three Selectmen went to Sawyer Field to determine where the stage would be relocated to and all agreed to the current location. Selectmen will notify Matt Blanchard and DJ Wing not to wing the snow onto the stage and to further get some T-111 and urethane, to put a back on the stage and urethane or bin the wood for protection.

Chairman Cleary did ask how deep the conduit should be, Selectman Parisi indicated once it is determined where and how deep, he will dig the trench

- **Bands** – Selectman James discussed music this winter, he is hoping for December or January as a start up date. He further asked about the floors and when they will be complete. For the first music event, James is hoping for Tyler Allgood & Friends doing an open mic/jam session.
- **Transfer Station** – Selectman James reported that he really needs additional help at the Transfer Station. He was alone on Sunday and people there were times there was a lot of chaos.

Selectmen discussed the options at this time, no decisions were made.

Selectmen discussed meeting on a weekly basis. This will begin next week, September 18, 2023.

With nothing further, Chairman Cleary adjourned the meeting at 8:00 pm - The next Selectmen's Meeting will be Monday, September 18, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra Davidson, Town Administrator