

Bennington Board of Selectmen

November 6, 2023

Meeting Minutes – 6:00 pm

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

Staff: Deb Davidson, Town Administrator

Public: Kathleen Hoiriis, Judy Heddy, Doreen Cawley, Tina Vallier, Roger Cawley

Appointments:

6:15 Police Chief, Jason LePine – Chief LePine was before the board to discuss the future of the Police Department

- **Mileage Logs** – Chief LePine presented the board with his monthly mileage
- **Cruisers** – Chief LePine reported the cruisers are in good shape.
- **Prosecutor** - Chief LePine discussed the prosecutor, Michael Beausoleil will be moving on effective January 1, 2023. LePine is exploring options, he has nothing definitive at this time. He will report back in two weeks.
- **3rd Full-Time Officer** – Chief LePine proposed a third full-time officer to the Selectmen. LePine feels strongly there is a need for a 3rd full-time officer. Selectman James asked how many calls does the police department have on an average year. LePine replied approximately 70 cases, 40-50 arrests/year.

Selectmen told LePine they would like to get a monthly report. This is something they had received in the past and would like to begin receiving them again.

LePine read the costs for the part-time academy vs. the full-time academy. He would like to send Haley to the full-time academy in February. The academy is a 16-week program, once completed, Haley would have full-time officer status. LePine would be prepared to offer Haley a full-time position upon completion of the academy if the position is approved by the Town. The cost to implement this position with wages, benefits, education is \$100,000.00 +/-

Selectmen made no decision at this time, they will discuss this among themselves before making any decisions about the possibility of a third full-time office or discussing it further with Chief LePine.

6:45 – Kassy Hoiriis – To discuss the condition of Whittemore Lake. Several residents were present with Mrs. Hoiriis. They are all concerned about the water at Whittemore Lake. Cyanobacteria is very dangerous to dogs and this has been a problem at Whittemore Lake since August. After research they have learned that the reason for the contamination could be sewage, fertilizer or even a possibility when the beaver culvert up stream was released.

Chairman Cleary responded by stating that there have been conflicting stories, the State has not replied and to date we haven't had any clear definition as to why this bloom has taken over Whittemore Lake.

Discussion as to the flooding on the left towards Greenfield being a possibility? Winnemac Camp, where are the campers dumping? Safety of the fish and birds. How many other water bodies have been infected? Why has Whittemore been infected for so long. What can the Town do?

Discussion as to contacting the NH Loon Preservation, NHEPA, NHDES and NH Wetlands Bureau. The Town Administrator will make calls to the mentioned organizations as well as, the Town of Greenfield.

The Town Administrator was instructed to contact the State and ask them to do a presentation at the next Selectmen's Meeting and to further notify all the residents who were present tonight as to the time the State will be at the meeting.

Selectmen thanked the residents for coming to the meeting and are fully understanding of their concerns.

Minutes: Selectmen reviewed the minutes of October 30, 2023. With minor changes, motion by Chairman Cleary to accept the minutes. Seconded by Selectmen James and Parisi. Motion passed – 3-0

Financial: Payroll Register and A/P Register for the week of 11/2/23 were signed.

Other:

- **Fencing update** – Selectmen reviewed the quotes from Crowe Fencing for Newhall Field fence storm damage, Whittemore Lake fence storm damage and a new install at the Sawyer Park Playground. The quotes for the Newhall Field fence was \$490.00 and Whittemore Lake fence was quoted at \$9,300.00, these quotes will be submitted to our insurance company. Selectmen stated they would cut trees and haul brush when the fence for the lake is ready to be installed. Abutters to the fence and the property will be notified when cutting of trees and installation of the new fence will begin.
- **Elevator update** – The State of NH has inspected the elevator and a temporary permit has been issued. The gymnasium floor can now be used again publicly. Discussion followed regarding the elevator and installing signage how to properly work the lift and also that adults will be required to accompany children, if children need the lift.
- **Tri-Town Meeting update** – Town Administrator met with Antrim & Frankestown Town Administrators to discuss the Tri-Town pit. The contract was reviewed. No decisions were made. Both Towns had an interest in reviewing the maps Bennington has on file, the Town Administrator informed both Town Administrators they were welcome to come review the files anytime.
- **Jerome Varnum** – Mr. Varnum has requested use of the gymnasium for Saturday, December 2, 2023 for an art exhibit. The exhibit would last between 12 – 2.
- **Preliminary Tax Rate** – Selectmen reviewed and discussed the preliminary tax rate. After a brief discussion. Motion by Chairman Cleary to utilize \$45,000.00 of the fund balance in an effort to reduce the tax rate. Seconded by Selectmen James and Parisi. Voted 3-0.
- **New Copier** – Town Administrator reported to the Board the new copier will be arriving towards the end of the week. Hallmark sales rep said the service agreement will roll over with the new copier. Knowing how badly a copier is needed, they said we can receive delivery and pay for it in 2024. The cost with a trade in will be \$3,900.00.

Adjournment:

With nothing further, Chairman Cleary motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 pm. Seconded by Selectmen James & Parisi. Motion passed 3-0. The next scheduled Selectmen's Meeting will be held on Monday, November 13, 2023 at 6:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra Davidson, Town Administrator