

Bennington Board of Selectmen

November 20, 2023

Meeting Minutes – 6:00 pm

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

Staff: Deb Davidson, Town Administrator

Public: Resident, Bethany Craig

Chairman Cleary called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm, 2nd by Tony Parisi.

Appointments:

6:15 – Resident, Bethany Craig – The Town Administrator mentioned there are conflicts with two dates for the use of the Gymnasium, those dates are March 8, and May 10. Selectman James indicated he has bands already booked for those dates, and Bethany had reserved the space for 4-H. It is likely the Fire Station will be finished with renovations and the 4-H could use that space. Selectman James said the Friday Night Music is every three weeks, apologized for any inconvenience. Bethany asked that if the 4-H has to use the Pierce Elementary School space, she would like the town to pay any fees. A brief discussion followed. Selectmen unanimously agree, there are plenty of other options, the Town will not pay any fees if 4-H uses PES. The Fire Station should be finished and able to be used.

6:30 – Code Officer, John Kendall –

- **303 Greenfield Road** - Selectmen explained Mr. Woodward was before the Selectmen two weeks ago, discussing his property at 303 Greenfield Road in Bennington. Selectmen further discussed the comments made about Mr. Kendall and they were looking to Mr. Kendall to discuss his inspections on the project at 303 Greenfield Road. John stated that he met 4 or 5 times with Mr. Woodward, the first time was in January of 2020, they discussed the need for a shoreland permit from the State. Mr. Woodward also received a septic upgrade approval. John issued a foundation permit only. The project consisted on lifting an old camp, pouring a foundation and setting the camp back onto the foundation. Kendall stated the contractor did a good job. The

foundation was inspected in April 2020, upon inspection it was noted the foundation was done to code and the house was lowered, further stating that on an old home, bolts and reconnect of the wood on the home are not checked. The knee wall, electrical and plumbing reconnect are what were inspected. The home did sag, but that was expected with the age of the home. Kendall made 4-5 trips to talk with Mr. Woodward and explain what happened. John explained rebar is not a code requirement by today's standards. Often the foundation can become disrupted on backfilling, not on the pour. Further discussing, the home was a small scissor truss home and it could have sprung when set onto the foundation. When a foundation application is issued, the truss was not what John was inspecting. There was nothing that made Mr. Kendall think anything was done incorrectly when he did his inspection. The foundation was done to code.

Selectman James asked if the house is unsafe. Kendall assured the Selectmen the home is solid, it was a camp and it is probably much safer than it was. It may be out of plumb, but the house is safe.

Selectmen thanked John for his input.

- **VFW Improvements** - VFW improvements were discussed so Mr. Kendall is aware that Jim Creighton may be in touch when building permits are required. It was discussed there will be two bathrooms required, one an ADA and one regular bathroom. They can both be uni-sex bathrooms.
- **Construction work at Town Hall** - Gymnasium recommendations were discussed. John provided the Selectmen with a recommended glue down flooring. It has an aluminum oxide finish and would be either 2 or 4 mil. There would be a ¼" underlayment. This would be better for the transition to the door. John would not recommend a "click" flooring. The current floor is in tough shape and to sand and finish would cost \$10,000 and wouldn't last. It is John's opinion the current floor is pretty much irreparable. It would cost between \$18,000-\$20,000 to do the work that John recommended. Selectmen agreed, 3-0, to have John get prices for the work recommendation, as it isn't worth the money for refinishing the current floor.

The Stairs & Foyer will be sanded and painted with 3 coats of heavy paint.

The bathroom will be a unisex toilet, sink with pull bars. Selectmen agreed, 3-0, to have John contact Jarvis Adams Plumbing to provide a price for the bathroom.

ADA ramp – John Kendall discussed this needs to have an architect design, there needs to be a poured footing and concrete is the best option. Selectmen approved, 3-0, Kendall getting a design done and then the project will be put out to bid. There is no push button requirement, installing a bell for assistance would meet the ADA requirements.

- **Water/Sewer** – John discussed he has spoken with Matt Miller of the Water Commission, as well as the State Health and Human Service Department. There are problems with grease being put down the sewer and if something isn't done about it, there will be unanticipated expenses for the Town. There was a problem with grease being put down the system and becoming so solid it took days to clean out. John is going to meet with each business in Town and recommend grease traps be installed to avoid any unanticipated town expense for cleaning out the grease. An alternative is to implement an ordinance to address grease traps.
- **Cyanobacteria** – Selectmen discussed the problems at Whittemore Lake with the cyanobacteria. Selectmen all agree they need to do something. They provided John with a DRAFT policy for septic pumping on the lake and assurance the septics are being properly monitored. This has been done in other communities with water bodies and does not have to go to voters to become implemented. John indicated he is familiar with these policies with other communities he works in. John suggested talking with Town Counsel & the State and having a mandated testing. It is a process in which a dye is put down septic systems and would show if the system is in failure or not. Town Administrator will contact Michele Condon from the NHDES and speak with Town Counsel as to how to proceed with this option.

- **7:15- Fire Chief, David Foster** – Chief Foster asked for a non-public session for the reason to speak on a personnel matter.

In accordance with RSA 91A:3 II (c) Chairman Cleary motioned to enter into a non-public session. Seconded by Selectmen James & Parisi. Motion passed 3-0

7:56 pm Chairman Cleary motioned to enter out of the non-public session. Seconded by Selectmen Parisi & James.

No decision was made during the non-public session.

- **Towers** - Chief foster discussed the need for more towers, better service for radios. It would cost the town approximately \$60,000 - \$70,000. No decisions were made

8:00 pm – Selectman Parisi excused himself from the meeting at this time.

Minutes: Motion by Chairman Cleary to accept the minutes of November 13, 2023. Seconded by Selectman James. Motion passed 2-0 with Parisi being absent.

Financial: Payroll and A/P Registers were signed by the Selectboard

Other:

- **Budget review** – Selectmen will have a work session only next week.
- **Dates & Times for budget meetings** – Selectmen reviewed the dates and times. The first public hearing is scheduled for Monday, January 22, 2024 at 6:00 pm; Deliberative Session will be held Monday, February 5th, 2024 at 6:30 and the SB2 meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 12, 2024 at 7:00 am. All meeting will be held at the Town Hall Gymnasium.
- **Primary Election** - The primary election will be held, Tuesday, January 23, 2024 at 7:30 am and voting will be in the Town Hall Gymnasium. Selectmen were reminded they need to be in attendance for this day. They do not all

have to be there at the same time, but there does need to be a selectman's presence at the voting.

- **Gazebo** – The Bennington Historical Society would like to hold a Holiday event on Saturday, December 16, 2023 at the Gazebo. The event will be held between 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm with hot chocolate and snacks available for all. Motion by Chairman Cleary to allow the Bennington Historical Society to use the Gazebo on December 16, 2023 for their Holiday Event. Seconded by Selectman Parisi. A brief discussion followed. Motion passed 3-0.
- **Table Usage** – A Bennington resident asked if he could borrow a 6' table for Thanksgiving, he will sign it out and return it on Friday. Motion by Chairman Cleary to authorize the use of the 6' table to Ckris Wallenstein for Thanksgiving. Seconded by Parisi & James. Motion passed 3-0. Town Administrator will notify Mr. Wallenstein

Signatures:

Selectmen signed the CD signature page for the Conservation Commission CD that the Treasurer will be investing funds into.

Bethany Craig - Prior to adjournment, Bethany Craig asked if she could address the Board of Selectmen. She stated that she feels the office lacks communication and transparency. Her only example was, she said the town has not put minutes on the website since October 16, 2023. Bethany further commented she thinks the newsletter is an embarrassment, that is why she chose not to put anything in the newsletter. She was told the minutes are available at the office, putting them on the website is a courtesy. Bethany referred to a resident who is unable to get to the office to get minutes and needs them on the website. The minutes can always be emailed to a resident if they ask. Town Administrator said she will speak to the webmaster. As far as the newsletter, it wasn't in a final draft and it was put on the website in error. Selectmen hadn't seen the newsletter until tonight. Again, the Town Administrator and the webmaster will resolve this matter. With nothing else,

Chairman Cleary asked if that was all. Bethany said she would start coming to meetings on a regular basis.

Chairman Cleary asked the Town Administrator to have Chief LePine come to the next meeting at 6:00 pm. After the meeting with the Chief, the selectmen will have a work session. The only appointments are for emergency only until the following week.

Adjournment:

With nothing further, Chairman Cleary motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 pm. Seconded by Selectman James. Motion passed 2-0.

The next scheduled Selectmen's Meeting will be Monday, November 27, 2023 at 6:00 pm. This meeting will be a work session only.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra Davidson, Town Administrator