

Bennington Board of Selectmen

January 8, 2024

Meeting Minutes– 6:00 pm

WORK SESSION

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

Staff: Deb Davidson, Town Administrator

Public: Bethany Craig

Chairman Cleary opened the meeting at 6:02 pm.

Selectmen went over the budget, they understand any increase/decreases in the budget. The only change that was agreed upon was the tipping charges for Sanitation, that will be increased \$3,000.00. Tipping charges are increasing and so should the line item.

Minutes: Selectmen reviewed and accepted minutes for January 2, 2024.

Financial: Selectmen reviewed and signed A/P & Payroll Manifests for week ending 1/4/2024

Other:

- **Plow Truck Grant** – Vote of Authorization, NHDES – Motion by Chairman Cleary to authorize, Town Administrator, Debra Davidson to be the authorized signatory for the NHDES Clean Vehicle grant. Seconded by Selectmen Parisi & James. A brief discussion, once the signed motion goes to the NHDES, they will present it to the Governor for approval. Voted 3-0.
- **Transfer Station Application** – William Buzzell has submitted a part-time/per-diem application for a position at the Transfer Station. Selectmen reviewed the application and voted 3-0 to authorize the Town Administrator to contact Mr. Buzzell to come sign the paperwork to start the back-ground check.
- **Gymnasium By-Laws** – Town Administrator provided the Selectmen with by-laws that were adopted in 1980. The by-laws are very out dated and many of it does not apply to today's standards. Motion by Chairman Cleary to rescind

the use of the December 31, 1980 gymnasium by-laws until the Selectmen have a chance to review and make updates. Seconded by Selectman Parisi. Motion passed 3-0.

- **VFW Furnace** – It was brought to the attention of the office, the furnace was not working properly on January 1, 2024. The family who had rented it was unable to hold their function that day at the VFW. Hixson will be contacted to do the repairs.

Motion by Chairman Cleary to return the rental fee of \$50.00 to the family who was unable to use the facility. Seconded by Selectmen Parisi & James. Motion passed 3-0.

Selectmen further discussed having the highway department check the VFW on Fridays and Mondays throughout the winter.

- **CRF** – Selectmen were provided a sheet with what expenses were paid in 2023
- **ConVal Consolidation** – Selectmen discussed the ConVal Consolidation meeting. As a result of the survey, which was a cost to taxpayers of \$185,000.00, ConVal is looking to close Bennington, Frankestown, Dublin & Temple Elementary Schools. A 2/3 vote is needed for this to pass, Selectmen will urge residents to vote in March. It is alleged, there will be a \$2.5 million dollar savings in taxes, it is believed this is not an accurate finding. As it is felt those funds will quickly go back into the budget. Also alleged the average home will save \$200.00+/- per year on their tax bill. Considering the cost of bussing children in the elementary schools, it was discussed this doesn't seem like a very large savings. The Bennington Board of Selectmen do not support this proposal from ConVal. It was further discussed that ConVal is putting a warrant article to overrule the requirements for 2/3 vote, this passage would allow the School Board to make any changes they want, without the 2/3 vote that is currently required. Selectmen are not supportive of these proposals from ConVal.
- **Crowe Fencing** – Selectmen discussed the quote from Crowe Fencing for the repairs needed from the spring 2023 storm damage and installation of a fence

at the Sawyer Park playground. The Town Administrator was asked to contact Crowe Fencing to determine when they will schedule these installs.

- **Whittemore Lake** – Selectman James discussed having an evaluation of the lake done and to further follow up on mandating septic health testing on the homes on the lake. He has had positive feedback from residents on both of these matters.
- **PUC** – The Town of Bennington Community Power Plan has been submitted to the PUC and has been accepted. It is ready to go forward with a warrant article for vote in March.
- **Gymnasium Bathroom** – John Kendall and Jarvis Adams will be at the Town Hall, Tuesday, January 9, 2024 at 7:30 to go over the work to be done for the 2nd floor bathroom. Jarvis Adams is scheduled to start work this week.
- **Friday Night Music** – Selectman James said it was a successful event with over 40 people in attendance.
- **Highway** – Chairman Cleary reported the new truck is ready, waiting for the plow, it should be received this week. Positive feedback has been received regarding plowing this last storm.
- **Ski Area** – Selectmen discussed the many incidents at the ski area this season. They would like to meet with Susan Donnelly and discuss the water usage, and the ambulance calls. A meeting in February will be scheduled.
- **Alberto's** – It was reported a truck tore up the driveway at Alberto's this week. Selectmen discussed options for being able to hold the driver accountable. Chairman Cleary will speak with the owners of Alberto's about the suggestions.

Adjournment:

With nothing further, Chairman Cleary adjourned the meeting at 7:55 pm. The next Selectboard meeting will be on Monday, January 22, 2024 at 6:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Debra Davidson, Town Administrator