

Bennington Board of Selectmen

December 26, 2023

Meeting Minutes– 6:00 pm

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

Staff: Deb Davidson, Town Administrator

Public: There was no public present

Chairman Cleary called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm.

Appointments:

6:00 – Scott Liljeberg –

- **Mower** - Mr. Liljeberg was before the Board of Selectmen to discuss the CRF set up for the purchase of a mower. A new mower needs to be purchased in 2024, the CRF currently has \$13,000 +/-, Mr. Liljeberg requested that for 2024 only \$2500.00 be added to the fund to allow for the purchase. In looking at the current mower, it may be a good back up for the town.
- **Signage** – Mr. Liljeberg reported that the Town of Bennington signage was taken out recently, a person had a tire blow out and the sign and post was damaged. It has been reported to the police, and the repairs should be no cost to the Town. Mr. Liljeberg wanted to be sure the Selectmen knew this and the person who damaged the sign should be responsible for the repair/replacement, not the town. The Board did not know about this and thanked him for reporting it to them.
- **Newhall Field Damage** – a few weeks ago there was approximately \$800.00 of damage to Newhall Field. The name of the person is on record with the police and Mr. Liljeberg wanted to be sure that this repair does not come out of the budget. Restitution should also pay for this damage. The Board did not know about this damage to town property either, and again thanked Mr. Liljeberg for reporting it to them.
- **Class VI Road** – Larkin Hill to Blanchard Farm has had 20+ tires and brush piled in the road. This is a town owned road and is used as a walking trail and for other uses. It is going to be cleaned up by the highway. It is not subject to gates

and bars. Selectmen thanked Mr. Liljeberg for reporting this, they did not know about this and are glad it will be rectified.

- **Miller** – Mr. Liljeberg asked about 2023 tax billing on this property. It was brought to the attention of the Town Administrator, who has spoken to the assessor, John Hatfield. Mr. Hatfield had indicated it was an oversight, and the housekeeping would catch it up. It didn't happen in December billing, Mr. Hatfield will be notified and it will be determined if a supplemental bill is appropriate. Based on the time lines of building permits, inspections and certificate of occupancy, the property should be taxed 100%. The Town Administrator will contact John Hatfield tomorrow morning.

6:15- Chief Jason LePine –

- **Part-time officer** – Chief LePine discussed Nicholas Cole, Selectmen agreed to have Mr. Cole present next week at 6:00 pm to be sworn in as a part-time Bennington officer.
- **Newhall Field** – Selectmen asked Chief LePine about the damage at Newhall Field. Discussion followed about the damage, the person was arrested and will be responsible for restitution. The only way to guarantee payment was to arrest the person and have a judgement.
- **Frank Dalton Estate** – Chief LePine reported to the Selectmen that the Bennington Police Department was left \$9,407.37 from the Dalton Estate. LePine was asking for the Selectmen to accept this donation.

Motion: Chairman Cleary made the motion to accept the unanticipated funds of \$9,407.37 from the Frank Dalton Estate and to further use the funds for the Police Department. Seconded by Selectmen James & Parisi. No discussion. Motion passed 3-0.

- **Incident on 202** – Chief LePine briefly discussed an accident on 202 that happened recently.

Minutes: Chairman Cleary motion to accept the minutes of December 18, 2023 as written. Seconded by Parisi & James. Motion passed 3-0

Financial: Selectmen signed the A/P & Payroll Manifests

Other:

- **Unanticipated Funds** - Acceptance of unanticipated funds in the amount of \$9,407.37. Chairman Cleary motioned to accept these funds above.
- **Selectmen work session** – budget and full-time officer were all discussed.
- **Selectboard Coalition** – Town Administrator reported that the Francestown Selectboard reached out and asked if Bennington Selectboard would be interested in joining a Selectboard Coalition with regards to the ConVal proposal of closing 4 of the smaller schools, one being Bennington. Discussion followed. Selectmen feel strongly this will not pass, it will need a 66% favorable vote to pass. Though Bennington Selectboard do not support this proposal from ConVal, they are all too busy to join another Board at this time.
- **Rooms & Meals** – \$142,144.57 was received for the 2023 portion of the rooms & meals tax.
- **Driveway Permits** – The Planning Board has presented an updated plan for Driveway Permits. This does not have to go to a town vote. Planning Board can adopt their updates at their next meeting.
- **Stagecoach Road** – Town Administrator reported a resident who lives on Stagecoach Road has concerns with the condition of the road. Selectmen discussed the road and noted it is on the list to be worked.
- **Mountain Road** – Selectmen discussed the culvert on Mountain Road. The road crew will be there tomorrow to clean it out.
- **Bat Remediation** – JP Pest will be here tomorrow to install the bat door. The lift is here, it will likely tear up the lawn which will need to be repaired in the spring.
- **Next Meeting** – Selectmen discussed having Department Heads report to them on a regular basis. Next week will be the start, Chief of Police, Fire Chief and Road Agent. A resident, is also scheduled for the next meeting.

Adjournment:

With nothing further, Chairman Cleary adjourned the meeting at 8:00 pm. Seconded by Parisi & James. Motion passed 3-0

The next Selectmen's Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 2, 2024 at 6:00 pm