

Bennington Board of Selectmen

Monday, May 13, 2024

Meeting Minutes – 6:00 pm

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

Staff: Deb Davidson, Town Administrator

Public: Melissa Clarke, Bethany Craig

Chairman Cleary called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm, second by Selectmen Parisi & James.

Appointments:

6:15 – Molly Eppig – Molly was before the Selectmen to discuss the progress with the Rhubarb Festival. Molly reported that things are coming together. There are two food trucks, pie judging, volunteers are stepping up, signage is up, everything needed is out of the recreation shed, Rhubarb store is set to go, anyone who has items they may want to sell can do so, 12-16 committed vendors and this year a new vineyard from Massachusetts is entering the wine tasting event. Selectmen waived the need for an Alcohol permit. Selectman James has rhubarb to either sell the roots or bundles for cooking. The highway guys will take everything to the field on Thursday and remove it on Monday. Selectmen will ask the highway crew to take care of this.

6:30 – Tomm Connors – Mr. Connors was present with Road Agent, Matt Blanchard to discuss the new fencing and work to be done at Whittemore Lake. Selectmen and Bennington Road Crew have been to the lake, removed the fencing and cleared some of the brush, trees and fallen debris. Mr. Blanchard explained he plans on installing two, 6: perforated piping, remove what is currently there, add 1.5" stone and fabric, this will divert the water to the culvert from Mr. Connors driveway to the culvert under the driveway. Blanchard intends to take out 12" under the driveway. He will dig a little deeper, the town will maintain both sides of the fence. After leveling out the beach, installing the fence, adding some screening plants it will be really nice. Mr. Connors asked about signage so people don't block his driveway, Selectmen agreed signage would be beneficial, and vehicles will be towed if they block his driveway. It was also suggested to use dump stickers for proof of residency. A lot of the problems

at the beach have been a result of out of town people. Selectmen will have the gate locked once installed. One last suggestion was buoys should be set from the fence and go out from there. All agreed this is a good idea. Mr. Connors then asked about the town taking care of his driveway? Mr. Blanchard indicated the Town cannot take care of his driveway, but Connors could contact Frankestown Sand & Gravel, they would be a good local business who would be reliable and provide what would be needed.

Melissa Clark wanted it noted, her mother Lorna Clark, said it looks beautiful at the beach already. Her mother has spent 70 years at the beach and recently commented it looks much better than it has in the past. She further stated, her mother will be patrolling the beach and if she finds condoms on the beach, she will bring them to the Selectmen, probably the Chair, since she knows him best. All present chuckled.

Selectmen reiterated what Matt Blanchard will be doing, buoys will be placed from the fence out, the fence will be locked, privacy shrubs will be installed, additional patrol of the water will be requested from the police and dump stickers will be an indication of residency. Further, Crowe Fencing will be contacted tomorrow to discuss the minor fencing changes to allow for access to work in the area. Mr. Blanchard and the highway crew will be at the beach on Thursday to continue with work.

With nothing further, Selectmen thanked Mr. Connors for coming to the meeting.

6:50 – Matt Blanchard – Blanchard provided two quotes on paving, he is waiting for one more quote. The quotes are for Greenfield Road, Mountain Road and the Beach Road. The quote for Greenfield Road is \$76,000, to top coat Mountain Road is \$43,000, and Matt is waiting for the Beach Road quote; Matt is guesstimating the quote will be around \$30,000.00 for the portion of road from the Tressle to 202.

There are funds for these projects, \$50,000 for paving and the deferred maintenance funds, as well as what was voted and approved in March.

Selectmen discussed hiring Robblee Tree Services to take down any trees that need removal in town. Two trees were discussed, one on Old Greenfield Road and one on North Bennington Road. Matt will go around town and identify any other trees that may be posing a danger at this time, he will then get a price from Robblee for removal.

Selectmen told Matt he did a good job on Bible Hill Rd. with the area of reclamation.

7:00 – Jason LePine – Chief LePine was before the Board for his monthly update. LePine presented the Selectmen with his mileage logs. He stated he has received two grants, one is for three solar speed signs and one is for speed patrol. The signs are for \$11,548.00 and the patrol grant is for \$1,600.00. Selectmen signed the grant. LePine indicated he would mail it this week. LePine also needs a copy of the minutes from tonight showing the motion to accept the funds.

Motion by Chairman Cleary to accept the grant for speed signs and additional speed patrol. The grant total is \$13,148.00. Seconded by Selectmen James and Parisi. Motion passed unanimously 3-0.

LePine stated that he is updating the systems within the department. He is having E-Crash and E-citations installed. Though E-Crash has more paperwork, it is also more detailed and auto sends the reports to the state. It should be live May 21, 2024. E-citations will allow tickets to be issued from the cruiser and go directly to the State. The State is paying for the majority of the programs.

Nick Cole is graduating from the academy on May 23, 2024. Excited to begin working in Bennington.

Haley Minahan is working on her run time, she is working with being hired at another department, but once she finishes the academy, she is excited to remain on the Bennington Police Department in a part time capacity.

New Rifles are on order.

Selectman James said he saw Jeff cleaning the cruisers, they are looking good. LePine stated there has been no money put into them other than tires and oil changes. New brakes will be needed in the older cruiser in the future.

Selectmen thanked LePine for his update.

Minutes: Chairman Cleary motioned to accept the minutes of April 29, 2024 as written.

Financial: A/P & Payroll Manifests were signed.

Other:

- **Appointments** – ZBA – Robert Christian, Peter Martel, Tony Parisi Alternate; Trustee of Trust Funds – Mike Munhall; Cemetery Trustee – Robert Christian
- **Gravel Tax Warrant** – Map 10 Lot 47 & Map 10 Lot 47A
- **QUOTE** – Selectmen reviewed and discussed a quote for Welcome to Bennington signs & NO Dogs Allowed signs – Total for all signs is \$980.00. Chairman Cleary voted to approve the quote, seconded by Selectmen Parisi & James. Votes affirmatively 3-0
- **Mediation** – PSNH Mediation Schedule – May 22, 2024 – Selectmen discussed this, Selectman Parisi may be able to attend via zoom. Chairman Cleary and Selectman James cannot attend. The Town Administrator will notify counsel.
- **Whittemore Lake Snakes** – A resident had asked about the snakes at Whittemore, a child was bitten last year. After looking into this, the snakes cannot be removed, there is nothing the State can do. The suggestion from the State is residents should be cautious of them when swimming.
- **Clean Fleet Grant** – The Town was awarded the Clean Fleet Grant for the highway truck. The amount of the grant is \$134,160.00, this is 80% of the cost of the vehicle. The town is responsible for the 20% remainder, funds will come out of the CRF. Road Agent, Matt Blanchard has been working with the awarded company to order the new truck. Selectmen approved moving forward and were glad to hear of the award.
- **Names for appreciation** – Discussion as to the names that Chairman Cleary recommended be put on the plaque of appreciation for service to the Town of Bennington. The three names at this time will be Denise French, Joyce Miner and John Cronin.
- **Gymnasium Use Policy** – Selectmen reviewed and unanimously signed the gymnasium/lift use policy. Selectmen instructed the Town Administrator to forward a copy to all who have reserved the Gymnasium and to further incorporate the policy into the facility use application.
- **Beach**

Adjournment:

7:15 – Chairman Cleary motioned to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Selectmen James & Parisi. Motion passed 3-0.

