

**Bennington Board of Selectmen**  
**Monday, June 3, 2024**  
**Meeting Minutes – 6:00 pm**

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

**Staff:** Deb Davidson, Town Administrator

**Public:** Melissa Clark, Bethany Craig

Motion by Chairman Cleary to open the meeting at 6:00 pm. Seconded by Selectmen Parisi & James. Motion passed 3-0

6:01 pm In accordance with RSA 91A:3 II (e) motion by Chairman Cleary to enter into a non-public session. Seconded by Selectmen Parisi & James. Motion passed 3-0.

6:04 pm motion by Chairman Cleary to enter out of non-public session and to further seal the minutes. Seconded by Selectmen Parisi & James. Motion passed 3-0.

**Decision:** To authorize the Town Administrator to discuss negotiation offer with Attorney, Chris Boldt.

**Appointments:**

**6:15 – Mike Hoyt –** ConVal District Update – Mr. Hoyt was before the board to discuss what has transpired at Conval since the last time Hoyt met with the Board of Selectmen. Matters discussed:

- What will it look like if one town leaves the district vs. if both Francestown and/or Dublin leave. Hoyt replied that an exact determination cannot be made at this time. The School Board is getting closer but there are no exact numbers at tis time. The percentage will remain the same. Bennington would be looking at a 1.6% increase if both towns leave. If only Dublin leaves Bennington is looking at a .72% increase, if only Francestown leaves .73% increase. The percentage is accurate but the dollar amounts are not yet determined. There are many variables, an example what it would cost if the towns maintain their own schools.

- Superintendent, Kimberly Saunders has left the district. Ann Forrest will be the Interim Superintendent, at least through the winter and possibly into early spring when interviews will start.
- New Athletic Director has been hired. The former principal at Peterborough Elementary School has been hired. He was a former Athletic Director in another school district. The position will be the only Athletic Director, hoping for continuity. Excess funds will be used for “game day” to cover expenses.
- Feasibility Study is on track, though some communities would like it to be moving along faster, they are working to have a well-informed School Board.
- Other items being looked at closely are budgets, how do things work, stream line programs, economics and more.

Chairman Cleary mentioned the school board needs to be addressing elementary schools, possibly combining K-5 or 6, maybe eliminating 1 middle school, schools would be full then. There is plenty of room in the elementary schools and the district should not be repeating history. Cleary stated that a lot has changed over the decades and a better plan needs to be in place, thinking of the future.

Mike Hoyt discussed there is a lot of building for 55+ units going in. Age is driving that need for housing, more boomers and less children are a factor. Chairman Cleary stated there is currently a shortfall of housing by 24,000, and it is estimated by 2030 there will be a shortfall of housing of at least 60,000. This needs to be discussed on the local level.

It was mentioned that trust has been broken with Conval and it needs repair.

Selectman Parisi mentioned that Conval may never repair the damage that has been done. Economically, institutionally and more.

Hoyte mentioned that he has met with both Frankestown and Dublin committees, they said nothing against the district, their concerns are about losing their schools in their communities.

- ConVal Payments – It was mentioned to Hoyt that the ConVal payment schedule had an error that was discovered. The error was in the amount of \$253,000.00. The new Business Administrator was notified and did apologize for the error, adjusting the Bennington payments for June and July by \$253,000.00

Bethany Craig indicated she would like to meet with Selectmen and update them on the Bennington Education Committee. Selectmen discussed and agreed July 1, at 6:15 would be best.

**Minutes:** Motion by Chairman Cleary to accept the minutes of May 13, 2024 as written. Seconded by Selectmen Parisi & James. Motion passed 3-0

**Financial:** A/P & Payroll Manifests were signed by all three Selectmen

**Other:**

- **Water/Sewer Separate Checking accounts** – Selectmen discussed this matter. Motion by Selectman Parisi to establish separate checking accounts for water and sewer. Seconded by Selectmen James & Cleary. Motion passed 3-0. Town Administrator will discuss this with the Treasurer.
- **Municipal Credit Card & other policies** – Discussion regarding auditors not happy with personal use of credit cards for town purchases. Bar Harbor Bank has been contacted, they are willing to work with the town to establish a municipal credit card. A DRAFT credit card policy was reviewed. Things are different than they used to be in the office and if a policy is adhered to, the use of a municipal credit card makes sense. Motion by Selectman Parisi to accept the credit card policy and to further authorize Town Administrator to take whatever steps are necessary to obtain a credit card for the Town of Bennington. Seconded by Selectmen Cleary & James. Motion passed 3-0
- **Abatements** – Several abatements were signed for residents who changed their water meters either shortly before or after the last water bills went out. One abatement was signed for an incorrect read.
- **Facility Contract, Summer Reading Program** – Selectmen signed facility use for the summer reading program for the following dates July 2, July 9 or July 25,

July 16, July 18, July 30, August 1. Depending on weather, either the gymnasium, the gazebo or the VFW will be used for these events.

- **Facility Contract, Private Party** – Selectmen signed a facility use contract for a baby shower to be held on June 30, 2024 – 3:00 – 6:00 pm in the Town Hall gymnasium.
- **Whittemore Lake Fence Update** – Chairman Cleary reported the fence is complete, the highway crew will be laying down loam, planting grass and sprucing up the beach. The beach is looking very good. Carrie Hibbard has accepted the position as a beach attendant over the summer. She was the only applicant for the position and will be a good fit.
- **Timber Tax Warrant** – Selectmen signed a timber tax warrant in the amount of \$149.24
- **Building Permits** – Selectmen reviewed and signed building permits for Dennis Vergato, Curtis Homestead, John & Robyn Manley.
- **Signage** – New town signs are installed, Selectmen authorized the purchase of two more.
- **Recent tax liens** – Selectmen discussed two properties that recently had a lien placed upon them. A certified letter from the Tax Collector will be sent to these property owners encouraging a forbearance agreement be established and followed.
- **Vacation request** – The Town Administrator requested some vacation time in the next few weeks. Selectmen approved this request.

**Adjournment:** With nothing further Chairman Cleary adjourned the meeting at 6:30 pm. Seconded by Selectmen Parisi & James. The motion passed 3-0  
The next Selectmen’s meeting will be Monday, June 17, 2024 at 6:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Debra Davidson, Town Administrator