

Bennington Board of Selectmen

Monday, July 1, 2024

Meeting Minutes – 6:00 pm

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

Staff: Deb Davidson, Town Administrator

Public: Melissa Clark, Bethany Craig

Appointments:

6:15 – Code Officer, John Kendall – Railing cost – Mr. Kendall presented a price for install of the railing for the handicapped ramp. Selectmen reviewed the recommendation from John and agreed this would be the best option. Catherine McGillicuddy has provided a resource for the install. The price is \$2400 for materials and probably a three day install, the total cost would be approximately \$3,500.00. Selectmen unanimously approved the install as presented.

John Also discussed leach-field systems and in the future requesting a \$50.00 fee. Also, a pre-application with the state should be required. There was a recent install that was built too close to the boundaries and now the property owner will have to go before the ZBA for a variance. The \$50.00 would cover the bed bottom inspections, and will also eliminate these errors. The fee will also allow the install to be watched before installed, the town will work with the state.

Selectmen were supportive of this recommendation.

6:30 – Melissa Clark – Melissa presented two names, and herself as people who would like to form a Recreation Committee. They have plans to do a variety of activities throughout the year. They would like to see how it goes with the three and will seek out volunteers to help with the implementation of programs.

Selectmen signed the appointments for Melissa Clark, Shelly Griswold and Justin Drew to establish a recreation committee. Selectmen thanked Melissa for the interest in the position.

6:41 – Chief, Jason LePine – Chief LePine was before the Board of Selectmen to update them on the police department.

Radar Signs – The grant has been approved by the State. The signs have been ordered. The town pays upfront for the signage, then the state will reimburse the town 75%. Discussion as to where the signs should/could be located was discussed. Chief LePine would like to get some additional posts to make relocation easier.

Nick Cole – Nick is the newest hire for the Bennington Police Department. Nick was hired to work part-time and will work more if necessary. He was a previous officer for Antrim, took some time off and has recently passed the part-time academy. Selectman James asked if he would be willing to work full time? Chief LePine stated he has a full-time job elsewhere, so no. In approximately 3 months he will be on his own, currently Nick is doing his FTO with Chief LePine.

Bennington Coverage – Chief LePine discussed he has spoken to several certified officers, the wage scale in Bennington isn't enough. Chief LePine advocated for Haley Minahan to attend the full-time academy and upon completion she would commit to working in Bennington. She currently lives in Laconia, her boyfriend is a police officer in New Boston, she said she is fine with the commute, but she would not be able to take call while living in Laconia. Tomorrow, July 2, is the due date for the full-time academy. The academy is a 16-week program, upon completion after a short-time of more ride along Haley would be good to go on her own. Chief LePine stated he was good to go forward with Ms. Minahan enrolling into the full-time academy with Selectmen's approval.

Chief LePine thanked the board for their consideration of hiring Haley Minahan full-time. He further discussed consideration of a contract with the Town of Antrim, they would cover Bennington 40 hours/week at a price of \$1,000.00 per week. This initial contract could be signed for 6 months to start. LePine provided a copy of the contract, signed by Antrim Chief of Police, John Blake. The contract could always be extended, they would handle 40 hours of patrols, calls, investigations and provide weekly logs. Dispatch would be notified and they have a process to handle calls when Antrim would be covering Bennington.

Chairman Cleary stated the Board would need to discuss both hiring of a new full-time officer and the contract with Antrim/Bennington among themselves, they will be in touch with Chief LePine after they discuss these matters in private.

7:00 – In accordance with RSA 91A:3, II (C) Chairman Cleary motioned to enter into a non-public session. Seconded by Selectmen James and Parisi. Motion passed 3-0.

7:20 – Motion by Chairman Cleary to enter out of non-public and to further seal the minutes. Seconded by Selectmen James and Parisi. Motion passed 3-0.

Decision: There were no decisions made.

7:21 – In accordance with RSA 91A:3, II (a) Chairman Cleary motioned to enter into a non-public session. Seconded by Selectmen James and Parisi. Motion passed 3-0.

7:58– Motion by Chairman Cleary to enter out of non-public and to further seal the minutes. Seconded by Selectmen James and Parisi. Motion passed 3-0.

Decision: Chairman Cleary will contact Chief LePine and the Board further authorizes Haley Minahan to attend the full-time academy. To be paid a weekly wage while at the academy and after completion Chief LePine can hire her to become a full-time Bennington Police Officer.

Chairman Cleary will meet with the Town of Antrim and discuss the possibility of contracting Antrim to cover Bennington for 40 hours per week at \$1,000.00 per week for a period of 6 months to begin. Chairman Cleary will report back to the Board of Selectmen at their next meeting.

Minutes: Motion by Chairman Cleary to accept the minutes of June 3, 2024 with a minor correction, Seconded by Parisi & James. Motion passed 3-0

Financial: A/P & Payroll Manifests were reviewed and signed

Other

- **Signatures** –

PA – 28 – we no longer use the inventory sheets, the PA-28 was signed and will be returned to the Department of Revenue Administration.

Professional Service Agreement – Amy Doherty – Amy is the finance director for Barrington. She is extremely fluent with Accufund,

Accufund training has not proven to be beneficial. At the auditor's recommendation this is a great option and much more cost effective to the town. Amy will be working with Cathy and Deb to assist with finance software training. Selectmen signed the training agreement and authorized the request.
Approved 3-0

Timber Tax billing – Forever Forestlands, LLC

- **Map 3 Lot 15** – Request to purchase – Selectmen reviewed a letter from Stephen Stockwell inquiring about purchasing Map 3 Lot 15, a one-acre parcel owned by the Town of Bennington. Selectmen have had a market analysis completed. Selectmen would also like to discuss this with the Conservation Commission prior to making any decisions. At this time they unanimously agree to table this offer until a future date.
- **Treasurer CC Policy** – With the recent implementation of a credit card policy, the treasurer wrote a policy she would also like the Selectmen to approve. Selectmen reviewed, approved the policy from the Treasurer.
- **Beach Attendant** – Carrie Hibbard has been hired as the summer beach attendant. She is doing a nice job so far. Very enthusiastic. Town Administrator would like to get her a couple of shirts, identifying her as staff.
- **Road Work** – Chairman Cleary stated that the bottom of Old Greenfield Road is going to be having some work done, the property owner right there wants to hook into the sewer, must be done before the paving is done. Selectman Parisi mentioned that Whittemore Lake Road will be tarred this summer, they anticipate starting that project within the next 3-4 weeks. Selectman Parisi went on to say, he drove around town this weekend and the roads look good, specifically mentioning, Gillis Hill was in good shape.
- **PES Playground equipment** – Selectmen are very interested in the equipment, we will discuss this with our insurance company and the Town Administrator will reach out to the contact at PES.
- **White Birch General Store** – Selectmen discussed the store is doing very well.
- **Year to date budget** – Selectmen reviewed the year to date budget.
- **Sawyer Park Access** – Selectmen discussed they will be working on installing an access road to Sawyer Park, creating more parking in the area. The road crew and selectmen will begin this project by the end of August.

- **Fire Dept. CRF** – Chief Foster requested via e-mail to withdraw up to \$21,000.00. Funds will be used for equipment replacement for 4 Firemen and also to outfit two firemen. A brief discussion followed, Selectmen would like a detailed listing of the equipment to be replaced and outfitted.
- **Eversource** – Town Administrator provided a copy of a recent legal bill for the Eversource law suit. Deb mentioned that the legal budget will be overspent, this was an unanticipated expense for this year. Chairman Cleary signed the interrogatories submitted by the legal counsel.

Adjournment:

Chairman Cleary made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:03 pm. The next Selectmen’s Meeting is scheduled for Monday, July 15, 2024 at 6:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Debra Davidson, Town Administrator