

**Bennington Board of Selectmen**  
**Monday, November 4, 2024**  
**Meeting Minutes – 6:00 pm**

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

**Staff:** Deb Davidson, Town Administrator; Cathy McGillicuddy, Administrative Assistant

**Public:** Melissa Clark

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

**Appointments:**

**6:05 – Antrim Police Chief, John Blake** – Chief Blake presented a contract to the Selectboard which could merge Bennington/Antrim police departments. This came about as a result of Chief LePine’s resignation, which goes into effect March 14, 2025.

After reviewing the proposal, Chairman Cleary stated the Board of Selectmen were hoping for a savings with such a proposal.

Chief Blake discussed the savings of approximately \$60,000.00, while adding \$25,000 to a CRF for vehicles.

- Increased savings are 24/7 coverage vs. 80 hours/week
- IMC Live is currently in place in Antrim. The cost for that program is between \$6,000-\$15,000
- Antrim can house everything
- Relocating the current PD space to Antrim
- Accreditation with the State allows for a higher protection
- Bennington would have an officer in town 19-20 hours/day. Antrim is able to do this with allocating officers

Chief Blake stated it feels like a win/win

Selectman James asked if Antrim would take our full-time officer?

Chief Blake stated that she would be offered a position on the Antrim roster. Blake further stated the level of service would outweigh the negatives. Blake also mentioned good communication is a must.

In the event of separation, Chief Blake and Selectmen discussed what that would look like.

Selectmen thanked Chief Blake for the proposal and after review and discussing it among themselves, they will be in touch with their thoughts.

**6:15 Water/Sewer Commission** – Tyler Howe, Dennis McKenney & Melissa Clark were present to discuss the future operations of the Water/Sewer Department. Tyler Howe opened by stating as far as keeping their own set of books, they have an alternative for that.

- Setting up a capital reserve fund for the sewer side, the water side already has a capital reserve fund.
- Tracking water and sewer operating expenses and revenues, submitting an annual warrant article to deposit any proceeds from rate payers into the appropriate capital reserve fund.
- Establishing guidelines that are clearly written and explaining this procedure.
- Meeting with the Trustee of Trust Funds to determine what the best wording would be to keep the funds as broad as possible. There are a lot of projects that need addressing.

2024 projects completed was a fencing problem and building repairs.

The second quarter next year will be the end of the original plan. Still working to bring rates up to market values and keep up with the times is important. This prevents always playing catch up.

Action: Draft a CRF warrant article for a sewer/maintenance account, keeping it as broad as possible. Type a warrant article defining any surplus from the Water/Sewer line items be placed into the CRF's.,

**6:40 – Fire Chief, Zack Anderson** – To discuss 2025 budget proposal. After reviewing the budget, Selectmen told Chief Anderson that the town cannot absorb the large increase in the wages line item, a brief discussion followed.

The additional \$12,000 in the FD Equipment Replacement line is for the box and lettering for the new Fire Truck.

**Medical Replacement** – additional \$8,000.00 for a rescue box

**Dispatch Services** – Concord has chosen not to contract with us at this time, other options are being looked into. A couple of communities are looking into options as well, possibility of all changing to the same dispatch if it could work out.

**Ambulance** - \$40,000.00 will be the cost for several years. A contract was provided, Chief Anderson will email it to the Town Administrator.

**New Fire Law** – Effective July, 2025 a new law is going into place, fire gear must be PFAS Free. Bennington will be working towards that change.

**New Application** – Chief Anderson presented an application to the fire department, he has had several people approach him who would like to join. After a brief discussion, Selectmen unanimously support these potential applicants.

**Capital Reserve Funds** - Selectmen and Chief Anderson discussed Capital Reserve Funds and the need for new gear. Selectmen thanked Chief Anderson and the Fire Department for all they did on Halloween.

**Engine 1** – Chief Anderson discussed the engine had pump tests recently and all passed.

It was discussed to draft a warrant article to put the funds from the sale of the truck into the Fire Dept. CRF.

**New Truck** - Chief Anderson will get a hold of the salesman for the new truck and get a payment schedule. Selectmen stated they have not seen anything and would like to.

**Minutes:** Motion by Chairman Cleary to accept the minutes of October 28, 2024 as written. Seconded by Selectmen Parisi & James. Motion passed 3-0

**Financial:** A/P & Payroll Manifests were signed

**Signatures:**

**Oil Tank Replacement** - The only bid was from Ciardelli. Chairman Cleary motioned to contact Ciardelli, get the tanks replaced as soon as possible. Seconded by Selectmen Parisi & James. Motion passed 3-0

**Abatements-** duplicate billings (Dutil, Hardwick)

**Other:**

**Budget Work** – Selectmen reviewed the budget to date and made some minor changes.

**November 5<sup>th</sup>** – 1 selectman must be at the polls, 3 to count

**Adjournment:**

With nothing further Chairman Cleary motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:24 pm. Seconded by Selectmen James & Parisi. The next Selectmen’s meeting will be held on Monday, November 11, 2024 at 6:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Debra Davidson".

Debra Davidson, Town Administrator