

TOWN OF BENNINGTON
2025 BUDGET HEARING
Minutes of the Meeting – January 21, 2025 – 6:00 pm

Moderator, John Cronin, Selectmen James Cleary, Tony Parisi & Tom James were present.

There were approximately 32 residents, town officials and department heads in the audience.

Moderator Cronin opened the meeting at 6:00 pm, the audience said the Pledge of Allegiance. Cronin went on to explain the house rules and how this meeting will proceed. Cronin further explained the warrant article for a voting machine.

Moderator, Cronin went over the budget by departments.

With regards to Financial Administration, resident, Joe MacGregor asked if a computer is being replaced, what happens to the old one? He was told the Supervisor of Checklist will be provided the old one and the one in the conference room will be destroyed.

Once the Police Department Budget was reached, Chairman Cleary mentioned that Chief LePine is resigning on March 14, 2025. Cleary further discussed the possibility of regionalizing, discussion with neighboring communities has been taking place over the last few months. NO decisions have or likely will be made in 2025, therefore the decreased budget makes sense.

Questions were brought up with regards to the Fire Department.

In going through line items, Resident, Ron Clough asked if it is true the only thing wrong with the older fire truck was the pump had failed? Couldn't the pump have been replaced and/or a 2nd hand truck purchased? Mr. Clough asked why did we have to get a new one? Mr. Clough inquired as to why Mike Beauchamp's name is on the truck, he then asked why Bruce Edes and many other names were not on the Fire Truck? Clough stated he would like to see Beauchamp's name removed.

Chairman Cleary agreed with Mr. Clough.

Mr. Clough asked about the firewall at the fire station, lettering on the truck & the box that is being purchased. The town purchased a truck 25+ years ago and this was discussed, Clough indicated based on what the town was told years ago, the chassis should have been swapped over.

Resident, Rhonda Davie asked why these items were in the budget and not as warrant articles?

Resident, Joe MacGregor asked what the box exactly is?

Chairman Cleary answered that the new truck needs to be equipped properly. Further stating, the Tahoe needs the box to keep items from flopping around in the back of the vehicle. Fire Chief, Zack Andersen stated he is looking for a cheaper box for the vehicle.

Moving on, Moderator Cronin continued with the budget. No questions until Highway & Streets at which time Karen Belcher asked about the difference in the Truck Driver salary vs. Road Agent. It was explained the Truck Driver is two wages, the Road Agent is one.

Resident, Ron Clough asked why are we moving away from using 6 wheeled dump trucks?

Road Agent, DJ Wing replied that the decision was made in part due to the difficulties of finding people with CDL licenses.

Clough stated that salt doesn't do anything, dirt is required, further commenting that the orange truck is sitting rotting. Clough feels that one truck could sand the entire town, look for CDL licensed drivers.

No further questions or comments on the highway budget.

Sanitation budget was next discussed. Chairman Cleary stated that tipping fees have increased significantly.

Ron Clough asked if we would get money if the product was covered?

Curtis Dude replied stating that baling has been discussed. It is an option, but it will cost money to set it up.

Joe MacGregor asked if we are required to recycle? Would we save money if we just put everything in the trash? How much would that cost?

Curtis Dude explained we currently receive a small income on some product, he went on to discuss the process of recycling some amount of product.

A brief discussion of forming a recycling committee followed. No decision was made at this time.

The next item discussed was the Recreation, the line item for Miscellaneous was discussed, in 2024 it was believed that line would go down in 2025, it hasn't gone down much. Discussion followed as to what is needed, picnic tables & umbrellas for the beach and also to allow the new recreation committee some funds for their anticipated programs, as well as playground compliant equipment.

Moderator Cronin asked if there were any questions.

With no further questions or comments, Moderator Cronin motioned to adjourned the meeting at 7:00 p.m., Seconded by Joe MacGregor.

Respectfully submitted,



Debra Davidson, Town Administrator