

TOWN OF BENNINGTON

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Minutes of the Meeting – November 2, 2016

Selectmen Jeffrey Rose, James Cleary and Steven Osienski were present as well as Administrator Denise French. Also attending the meeting were Bethany Craig and Monadnock Ledger-Transcript reporter Abby Kessler. The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m.

Budget Committee Chair Richard Reed met with the Selectmen to discuss the following observations from the Budget Committee:

- Status of the Roads Advisory Committee. Although recommended by last year's Budget Committee with members appointed to the Committee August 31<sup>st</sup> the Roads Advisory Committee have yet to convene their first meeting.
- The need to identify deficient roads and prioritize their replacement, refurbishment and/or a maintenance schedule. The Town is responsible for sixteen miles of roadway.
- The Selectmen's recommendation that information could come directly from the Road Agent and not necessarily the Roads Committee.
- The recommendation that a three year forecast of road improvements would be of great value to the Budget Committee.
- Frustration from the Committee that the Road Agent did not submit a proposed 2017 budget as is required by all Department/Committee Chairs. Instead he requested funding to be the same as budgeted for 2016.
- The Committee plans to meet with the Water Commissioners and the Fire Chief to review their 2017 budget proposals.

Antrim Selectmen Robert Edwards, Michael Genest and John Robertson; Administrator Donna Hanson; Rescue Chief Sherry Miller; Fire Chief Marshal Gale and Bennington Fire Chief Michael Roina met with the Board to discuss the stated Antrim Ambulance cost increase and Bennington concerns:

- Since 2005, when Antrim initiated patient billing, Antrim has billed Bennington an annual flat rate of \$8,000.
- The 2017 cost for Ambulance services will increase to \$12,000.
- Due to fluctuations in Ambulance staff availability, Bennington rescue has been supplementing the Ambulance crew. Associated costs, as prepared by Bennington, equates to \$377 (January 1<sup>st</sup> to October 3<sup>rd</sup>) for time for ambulance assistance when Bennington personnel supplement the ambulance transport crew. An additional \$603 (April 23<sup>rd</sup> to October 24<sup>th</sup>) has been paid to Bennington rescue personnel who have responded to Antrim to provide patient care to their community.
- Selectman Genest's concerns that Bennington has equated a cost associated with mutual aid services.
- Bennington Selectmen concerns that their taxpayers are paying the cost of ambulance services through the annual flat fee assessed to Bennington; the taxpayers are paying wages for Bennington personnel to supplement Antrim ambulance; the patient is responsible for payment of the ambulance invoice.

Board of Selectmen Minutes – November 2, 2016

- Chief Gale reported on steps they have taken to shore up their ranks; the personnel shortage should be greatly improved upon certification of four active students.
- Upon inquiry, Rescue Chief Miller reported that Antrim Ambulance does not look at Crotched Mountain Ski Area as being a burden to their services. In fact, Crotched Mountain's Ski Patrol does a great job preparing the patient for transport. There doesn't seem to be a need for a Bennington Fire Official to respond to the Mountain.
- Bennington Selectmen reaffirmed their support of Antrim Ambulance and the services they provide. They, and Antrim Selectmen, both spoke of the long and productive partnership the two communities have.
- The \$4,000 increase from Antrim Ambulance was not debated; the \$12,000 flat rate will be included in Bennington's budget.
- After the conclusion of this portion of the meeting Chief Roina, Chief Gale and Rescue Chief Miller met and agreed to alter ambulance dispatch protocol; rather than Bennington personnel be summoned at the first re-tone for Antrim Ambulance they will be toned if a second re-tone of Antrim emergency service personnel is required.

Antrim Selectmen Robert Edwards, Michael Genest and John Robertson; Administrator Donna Hanson; Road Agent James Plourde; Francestown Selectmen Abigail Arnold; Brad Howell and Henry Kunhardt; Administrator Jamie Pike and Road Agent Gary Paige met with the Bennington Board of Selectmen and Road Agent Gary Russell to discuss matters associated with shared ownership of the shared Tri-Town Landfill Excavation Pit:

- Slight encroachment to the July 11, 2015 identified Phase 2 and Phase 4 areas have been corrected by self vegetating.
- Although barricades have been set up to keep trail traffic away, warning signage has not been installed in the area of the trails or along the boundary lines. Russell agreed to take care of this.
- An amended Alteration of Terrain Permit WPS-5744 has been issued by DES. The previously issued permit was inadvertently issued with a permit expiration date. This amendment removes the expiration date. The next required Progress Plan is due in June 2021.
- Issuance of the amended Alteration of Terrain Permit negates the planned realignment of Phases.
- Acknowledgement by Francestown officials that they have removed approximately 50% of their allocated material from Phase 1; the shared pit is their only source of material and they are not in a position to slow down their consumption. No decisions were made in response to Francestown offering to pay for additional material.
- The Boards requested new maps to more closely define the different phases of the project; a site walk is scheduled for the spring.

Gary Russell met with the Selectmen and discussed the following:

- Frustration expressed by the Budget Committee that he did not submit proposed 2017 budgets for the Highway Department or the Transfer Station. More importantly, the Budget Committee is again requesting 3-5 year plans for road maintenance projects and their associated cost estimates. It was agreed that Gary and the Selectmen will meet November 9<sup>th</sup> to jointly create the absent budgets.

Board of Selectmen Minutes – November 2, 2016

- As an official of the Greenfield Sportsmen Club, Gary sought permission to purchase two unused pieces of granite curb to cover an old (Greenfield) well at a purchase price of \$20 per foot. The request was unanimously approved by the Selectmen.

From 8:30 p.m. until 8:37 p.m. the Selectmen met in Nonpublic Session under RSA 91-A:3II(c) to discuss a personnel matter. Present were Selectmen Rose, Cleary and Osienski, Administrator French and Fire Chief Roina. Legal counsel will be sought to address the concern.

From 8:38 p.m. until 9:12 p.m. the Selectmen met in Nonpublic Session under RSA 91-A:3II(c) to discuss a security concern. Present were Selectmen Rose, Cleary and Osienski, Administrator French and Sergeant Jason LePine. No decisions were made.

The Selectmen acted on the following matters:

- Reviewed and approved the Selectmen's October 26, 2016 Minutes. Also reviewed was the Zoning Board of Adjustment's October 24, 2016 Minutes.
- Reviewed and approved the November 3, 2016 Payroll Register.
- Heard a report that the issue of an Acre Street construction project being built over an area protected by a utility easement is likely a property owner issue and separate from the recent ZBA decision to grant a variance for encroachment in a side setback. Further information is forthcoming from Town Counsel.
- Received confirmation from Town Counsel that the existing Rescue Vehicle Chassis Capital Reserve Fund, which was established in 1992, is not eligible to be used for purchasing an ambulance.
- Heard a report that the negotiated 2017 police prosecutor budget for Bennington has been set at \$31,153, an increase of \$1,495 (5%).
- Upon review of multiple years tax information and recognizing what appears to be a missing form, voted to abate a \$50 Inventory Penalty for M17/L31.
- Heard a conceptual report that the Congregational Church is considering an outdoor Christmas celebration that would likely impact Monument Square. The Selectmen voiced their support of the activity, as has a neighboring abutter.
- Signed a replacement Property Tax Warrant which corrected a clerical error.
- Signed an Intent to Cut for M2/L3-9.
- The following Building Permits were reviewed and approved: M10/L62, M17/L10, M19/L21B and M20/L9.

The meeting adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Denise French  
Administrator