

Bennington Town Board
November 5, 2020 7:30 p.m.
Meeting Minutes

Work Session began at 6:39pm. Councilmembers Mohun, Frounick and Waite audited bills. Councilman Gadd is excused tonight due to illness. Discussion on Delaware Solar and a project they are performing in the Town. Discussion on progress of solar project that was approved by the Town earlier this year. Payment was made on the Serial Bond for the highway truck and water project. There are still 12 years to go on payments for the water project. Discussion on Highland Glens water hook up.

Supervisor Grant called the meeting to order at 7:31pm; Supervisor Grant asked Councilman Waite to lead the pledge of allegiance.

Open Public Hearing on Cowlesville Fire Co. 2021-23 Services Contract and 2021 Town Budget

Motion by Frounick, seconded by Mohun to open Public Hearing on Cowlesville Fire Co. Contract 2021-23 and Public Hearing on 2021 Town Budget.

Ayes: 4 Noes: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 1

Financial Matters:

Transfers within accounts

General Fund: From: Zoning A8010.1 \$5,750 and from Buildings A1620.4 \$6,671 for a total of \$12,421; To: Assessor A1355.1 \$7,506 & A1355.4 \$940; Central Communications A1650.4 \$3,200; Concerts A7270.4 \$550; Historical Property A7520.4 \$225.

Highway Fund: From: Permanent Improv. DA5112.4 \$87,856.71 and General Repairs DA5110.4 \$16; To: Permanent Improv. DA5112.2 Capital Outlay \$87,856.71, and to Services to Other Govts DA5148.1 \$16.

Cowlesville Water District: From: Source of Supply SW1-8320.4 \$4,000 and Transmission & Distribution SW1-8340.4 \$1,730; To: SW1-8310.4 Admin \$5,730.

Motion to transfer funds by Waite, seconded by Frounick

Ayes: 4 Noes: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 1

General Fund vouchers #195 to #214 totaling \$6,566.29.

Highway Fund vouchers #155 to #170 \$43,659.78.

Cowlesville Water vouchers #55 to #60 totaling \$2,841.24.

Cowlesville Light vouchers: No bill at this time.

Motion by Mohun, seconded by Frounick to approve the vouchers for payment.

Ayes: 4 Noes: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 1

Financial Reports: Motion by Waite, seconded by Frounick to approve the Financial Reports ending October 31, 2020.

Ayes: 4 Noes: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 1

Communications:

The Clerk received monthly testing results from Biotrax. The Town Clerk received proposed Local Law #2-2020 from the Alden Town Clerk entitled Revisions to the Town of Alden Residency Requirements. A public hearing was held on November 3rd. The Supervisor received a thank you note from the Bennington Fire Co. for approving their contract for 2021.

Minutes of Previous Meetings:

Motion to approve minutes for September and October, 2020, made by Waite, Seconded by Mohun.

Ayes: 4 Noes: 0 Absent: 1 Abstain 0

Petitions and public concerns: Ed Aldridge wanted to thank the Town for taking care of the culvert on his property on Sinn Rd.

Councilman Mohun would like the Town to get in touch with our Town attorney regarding increasing coverage in the Town of Bennington from Spectrum for cable and internet service. Supervisor Grant will get in touch with him tomorrow. Ed Aldridge commented that they are slowing down the speed services to him during the day.

Departments:

Town Clerk – The Town Clerk spoke to the Board about the changes she would like to make to the Dog Enumeration process for 2021 and forward. We will no longer utilize a dog enumerator, but will instead utilize a postcard system that a service will send out to all residents in Bennington. Personal safety, health safety and cost savings were first and foremost in making this decision

Motion to approve utilizing dogenumeration.com for services was made by Waite, Seconded by Mohun.

Ayes: 4 Noes: 0 Absent: 1 Abstain 0

Voting all ayes, carried.

The Town Clerk also spoke to the Board about her intent to sell EZ Pass from her office. The Town would make \$4 per sale of the unit. Cashless tolls start across the state this week. The Board members did not have any objections, so the Clerk will look into the process.

Highway – The Highway Superintendent was unable to attend tonight’s meeting. They are currently doing work on the roads since we have some good weather. A resident on Krieger called to thank the Highway department for the fine work that they did on her road. Results of referendums: First referendum to change the position from elected to appointed, was defeated. Second referendum to change the term from two years to four years, was approved. This will go into effect for the 2021 election, 2022 term of office.

Park/Recreation - The Park is closed at this time. The snowmobile club will be putting up signs for the trail that runs through a part of the park.

Assessor – The Assessor will be doing a mass mailing on Ag exemptions to those residents that have previously filed.

Zoning – The County is handling this now and a few permits have come over since that change was made on 10/1/20. Councilman Mohun asked about training hours for the ZBA members, she would like to look into further to make sure they are up to date.

Water District – Water operator would like to purchase a metal detector to help detect the lines. The new meter for the Highland Glen connection may need to be read by a different reader. County may be able to assist in that.

Court – Security measures; election results. New door window has been installed for contactless payments and exchanging of paperwork. James Wawrzyniak was elected to the position of Judge beginning 1/1/21.

Hear Public Comments on Cowlesville Fire Co. 2021-23 Contract

No questions from the two members that are in attendance this night, Nick Szuniewicz and John Strzelec. Mr. Szuniewicz said that insurance, medical supplies especially during COVID and equipment maintenance have all gone up over the last three years. This has culminated in asking for additional funds over the next three years from the Town residents to cover their expenses. Councilman Mohun asked about the insurance that they are mandated by NYS to cover for all interior firefighters. If a resident wanted to hook up a dry hydrant, what is the process? Fire departments need to work with the DEC and the homeowner needs to contact their homeowner's insurance. Supervisor Grant asked that a budget be submitted to the Town Clerk per NYS law.

Motion to close the Cowlesville Fire co. 2021-23 Contract meeting by Mohun, seconded by Frounick.

Ayes: 4

Noes: 0

Abstain: 0

Absent: 1

Resolution #2020-11-1 Cowlesville Fire Protection District Contract

Whereas, the Town of Bennington has held a duly advertised hearing of all parties regarding the 2021-2023 Contract between the Town and the Cowlesville Fire Company for the Cowlesville Fire Protection District on this 5th day of November, 2020 at the Bennington Town Hall;

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved, that following consideration of any and all comments regarding said Contract, the Town Board hereby approves said 2021-2023 Contract in the amounts of \$81,190 for 2021; \$82,815 for 2022 and \$ 84,472 for 2023, with provision for water for training purposes, said amount to be levied upon the 2021, and subsequent 2022 and 2023 Town and County tax bills for parcels located within said District.

Motion by Frounick; Seconded by Waite.

Ayes: 4

Noes: 0

Abstain: 0

Absent: 1

Hear Public Comments on 2021 Town Budget

Supervisor Grant asked if there were any comments or questions regarding the budget. The Town budget will be staying under the Tax Cap for the 2021 budget. The Board members reviewed the budget at an October workshop meeting, levying \$1,390,807.18 to the residents for all line items in the budget. Councilman Waite questioned property exemptions for veterans in the Town. Ed Aldridge has questions on Assessor's rate of pay which is \$12/parcel. This is on par with other Towns. He will also be undertaking the revaluation and will receive a stipend which will encompass a 15 month period, the stipend will end after that ends. Councilman Mohun and Supervisor Grant discussed the Highway budget. CHIPS funding came in and the Town is rolling over some of these

funds into 2021. Ed Aldridge asked who the Highway Superintendent is now that Ken Czworka retired. Andrew Koch has taken this position. Councilman Waite asked if changes that were made be notated on a copy of the budget for the Board members review next year.

Motion to close the public hearing on 2021 Town Budget by Mohun, seconded by Waite.
Ayes: 4 Noes: 0 Absent: 0 Abstain: 1

Old Business:

Councilman Mohun asked if there were any updates on the new Schoellkopf Rd. Bridge. Construction bidding and award to take place late winter.

New Business:

Resolution #2020-11-2 Adopt 2021 Town Budget

Be it Resolved, that, following a duly advertised Public Hearing held on the 5th day of November 2020, the Bennington Town Board hereby adopts the Proposed 2021 Town of Bennington Budget with a total levy of \$1,390,807.18, and authorizes the amounts therein to be levied upon the real property within the Town of Bennington on the 2021 Town and County tax bills.

Motion by Mohun; Seconded by Waite:

Ayes: 4 Noes: 0 Absent: 0 Abstain: 1

Any other Business to Come before the Board/County Matters:

The County is working on their budget now. A lot of expenses due to COVID this year, some aid has come in, but not enough. Lost revenues at the County Hospital due to lack of elective surgeries. Currently looking at an increase of around 9.86% at this time.

Motion to adjourn by Councilman Mohun at 8:23pm.
Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Busch
Town Clerk