

**TOWN OF BEDFORD
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
January 11, 2023
10 Meetinghouse Road**

1. ROLL CALL: A meeting of the Bedford Town Council was held on Wednesday, January 11, 2023, 10 Meetinghouse Road. Participating were Bill Carter (Chair), Lori Radke (Vice Chair), and Councilors Phil Greazzo, Chris Bandazian, Sue Thomas, Dave Gilbert, and Kathleen Bemiss. Also present was Town Manager Rick Sawyer.

Chairman Carter opened the meeting at 7:12 PM.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Led by Chairman Carter.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS –

Kevin Glenn, 49 Constance Street, thanked the Council for what they do and those members that came before them. Because of what they've done, they live in a very desirable town. He knew at times what they do wasn't very popular or easy and thought at times they might question what they do. His family moved to Bedford 6.5 years ago. It began with a Police car outside the house with the lights flashing, because there was a tree down in the street. He and his 4-year daughter went outside to investigate. They received such a warm and friendly welcome by patrol officer turned detective James McMillen. It was a great way to start their move here. In 2019 he attended Chief Bryfonski's Citizens Academy. A couple of months later he joined the Bedford Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). Last October, Chief Bryfonski wanted to know if he would be interested in serving on a special committee and he said he would. He respects their leadership and was committed to the Town, to the emergency services provided to this Town and to the police officers. When he was at the Citizen's Academy, he was told that it was tough to retain police officers, because they were getting recruited by other towns. He understands that that's still a predicament and there are seven open positions. He wanted to know why, after Chief Bryfonski and his team have amazingly trained up these great men and women of the Police Department, they were allowing them to get hired by other towns. He wanted to know what was it that those other towns were offering them that Bedford wasn't. He appealed to the Council to take a closer look at what they were asking and see if there was any middle ground. He feared that if they couldn't reach a compromise, then the fine men and women from the Police Department would continue to get hired away by other towns who respect their experience, skills and expertise. His greatest fear was if that happens, it would make Bedford Police Department harder to hire for. What drives his concern was the crime in Manchester could find its way to the streets in Bedford and diminish what a beautiful town they have.

Joe Viola, 556 New Boston Road, thanked the Council for their service. He was there because of the fine men and women in the audience (PD officers). He thought there were some issues on the board that didn't seem too hard to overcome with a little bit of listening. They do a lot of talking with very little listening. If they listen to what they were asking for, it seemed like it made sense to him. It seemed like common sense. They need to keep these guys and gals. They are going to get stolen away. They need this quality. He has

lived in Massachusetts, Chicago, cities and towns and had never seen guys and gals like this. Silly stuff like helping a motorist get snow off of their roof, because they didn't know they had to get it off to dealing with big city crime. With Manchester so close, they deal with a lot. He wanted to show his support. He wouldn't get into the actual issues, but they didn't seem that big. They should be able to be overcome with a little listening.

Jon Snow, 10 Heather Drive, stated that he spent his whole life in the Town and the last 20 years working for the Town. He works on the red side, but they fully support their men and women in blue. He thought what needed to be looked at was a much deeper problem that resides in the Town. He had written letters, he's spoken to people, he's been brushed off and hadn't been given the opportunity that he deserved as a taxpayer and one of the longest serving employees in the Town. In the last 10 years, they've lost 52 police officers, and only six retired. In that same timeframe, they've lost 35 firefighters with only six retirements. He didn't know what it was going to take for the Town, the Council, the Town Manager, to finally look at this problem and say they deserve better. They either want people to come and work that enjoy working that were going to come and spend a long fruitful career serving everyone that works, lives or passes through Town. It seemed that they want every business to come to Town, they want people to build houses, but the last thing the Town had any interest in doing was hiring and maintaining and retaining high quality employees. This was an enormous problem and he wasn't sure why it wasn't readily talked about in the public venue more often. It's astounding to him as a lifelong resident of Town that after 20 years they are still talking about retention and moral in these two departments. They show up 24 hours a day when everyone was at home enjoying time with their families. They miss birthdays, they miss Christmases, and they miss all these holidays to serve everyone in these boundaries. He thought it was about time that the Council and everybody else stands up and supports the red and the blue in Town or they will be left with no one left to serve them.

Carl Rousseau, 13 Old Coventry Lane, stated that he supports the PD. He thought they've lost too many men. They're experienced and it cost a lot of money when you hire a new person coming in even if they were full-time certified; it costs the Town money. They've got to train and they've got to keep the men they have. He didn't understand the big problem; negotiate with those men and women and get a contract. There was no reason they were going to shut them out and just not negotiate. It's a simple theory; take care of their men. The guys and women are leaving. They weren't going to the State Police, they were going to local towns just like us. He thought they were leaving because it's monetary. They should keep them here and take care of them. They have a good force and they've got to stop the exiting officers. They have to keep them here.

4. PUBLIC HEARINGS

a. First public hearing on the proposed 2023 budget

Mr. Sawyer stated that the 2nd public hearing was in two weeks before it was moved to the Budgetary Town Meeting on March 15th. The total appropriations for the General Fund, Recreation Day Camp Fund, BCTV, and Sewer Fund totals \$38,106,798.

Chairman Carter opened the public hearing.

Chairman Carter closed the public hearing.

Mr. Sawyer stated that one of the things they can act on tonight was the Town Clerk's salary. Since this was an election year for Town Clerk, if there's a new Town Clerk elected, the Town Council needs to recommend a salary range for that position that could be modified or acted on at the Budgetary Town Meeting. Three years ago the range was set at \$51K - \$68K and the Council had determined that if a new Town Clerk was elected they would start at the bottom of the range. If they provide the adjustments that had been provided to non-union employees over the last three years, the range would increase to \$57,914 - \$74,305. They can set that tonight or wait until after the 2nd public hearing to decide what the range should be and where a newly elected clerk would be placed. If the same Town Clerk is re-elected there is a 5% increase included in the budget.

Councilor Radke wanted to clarify that he was asking them to set a rate for the new one if one gets elected. Mr. Sawyer stated that previously, the Council decided that any new clerk would start at the bottom of the range. The Council could make a decision about where someone could be slotted after they are hired, but State Law indicates that they should know what the range was prior to running for that seat. Councilor Radke clarified that it would have been decided on before January 25th, that's when the filing opening is.

MOTION by Councilor Gilbert that the Bedford Town Council set the range for 2023 for the Town Clerk position to be \$57,914 – \$74, 305. Seconded by Councilor Thomas. Vote taken – Motion Passed – 7-0.

b. Consideration of Transfer Station disposal, Town Pool, and Summer Camp rate increases

Mr. Sawyer stated that the proposed rate increases have been provided as a result of the discussion the Council had during their budget process and in response to the 34% increase in cost in the Town's trucking and disposal costs for municipal solid waste and as a result of having proposed increases in seasonal wages for pool and summer camp. At the last meeting, Ms. O'Brien and he reviewed the single day pass proposal at the pool and were recommending that the rate stay at \$5. All other fees were the same as they saw at their last meeting. There continues to be no charge for residents to bring household waste to the Transfer Station.

Chairman Carter opened the public hearing.

Chairman Carter closed the public hearing.

Mr. Sawyer stated that the recommendation to leave the single day pass at \$5 was that the proposed increase would have generated a \$250 increase in revenue that they didn't feel was necessary given that small amount. Out of Town residents pay double.

MOTION by Councilor Thomas that the Bedford Town Council adopt the Transfer Station disposal, Town Pool, and Summer Camp rates as proposed effective January 17, 2023. Seconded by Councilor Gilbert. Vote taken – Motion Passed – 7-0.

c. Consideration of Ordinance 2022-04 amending Chapter 236, Stormwater Management and Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination, to clarify requirements

Mr. Sawyer stated that the language in section 236-14 was further revised from the original proposal. The proposed changes to the ordinance were minor [new language and deleted items were shown on the screen]. There were two sections being amended. Section 236-13 was changing the first word; striking 'Upon' and inserting 'Within one year' and further adding in that sentence 'hard copy and an electronic' report. Section 236-14 was changed to correct some confusion. The sentence was changed to read: and \$2,500 'per acre of the contributing drainage area.' 'for every acre or portion thereof' was deleted. There was a regulation that goes along with that that the Council had seen and has a number of changes, but those were pretty well explained at the last meeting.

Chairman Carter opened the public hearing.

Chairman Carter closed the public hearing.

MOTION by Councilor Radke that the Bedford Town Council approve Ordinance 2022-04 amending Chapter 236-13 Final reports and Chapter 236-14 Town acceptance of drainage and stormwater structures and systems, and the adoption of the amended Stormwater and Land Disturbance Management Regulations. Seconded by Councilor Thomas. Vote taken – Motion Passed – 7-0.

5. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Schedule a public hearing in accordance with NH RSA 31:95-b for acceptance of \$381,538.28 of unanticipated bridge aid funds from the State of NH**

Mr. Sawyer stated that on July 25, 2022, Governor Sununu signed into law SB401, which provided these additional funds to the community. These funds could only be used for the construction, reconstruction, or maintenance of municipally owned bridges. These funds would go into a non-lapsing stand-alone account.

MOTION by Councilor Thomas that the Bedford Town Council schedule a public hearing for January 25, 2023 at 7:00 PM in accordance with NH RSA 31:95-b for acceptance of \$381,538.28 of unanticipated highway funds from the State of NH. Seconded by Councilor Bandazian. Vote taken – Motion Passed – 7-0.

- b. Action on the Bedford Public Works Teamsters Local Union No. 633 of NH Collective Bargaining Agreement**

Mr. Sawyer stated that the management team was recommending that the Council ratify the tentative agreement reached with the Bedford DPW Teamsters Local 633. It was ratified by the union for a four year period, which runs from January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2026. It was also recommended that the Council move the financial terms of the agreement forward to a warrant article that would be at the Budgetary Town Meeting. The existing 5-year agreement was completed at the end of 2022. Included in the agreement was a reduction of the probationary period from nine months to six months, a change in the volunteer on-call list from annual to quarterly, clarification of sick leave language, added tuition reimbursement language, reframed the drug abuse policy to meet current

DOT requirements, and cleanup language and Scrivener’s errors that had existed in the contract for many years. The most significant change was the implementation of a step system for this unit for the first time. Minimum pay at each level: \$20.88 for truck drivers, \$23.28 for equipment operators, \$24.55 for mechanics, and \$19.24 for Transfer Station attendants and laborers with a 5% increase between steps and there were 9 steps proposed in each lane. It was important to get these wages to be competitive with like communities as much as possible. The cost per year over the previous years for this contract would be approximately \$97K in 2023, \$71,809 in 2024, \$76,468 in 2025, and \$74,693 in 2026. The total cost for the wages and associated taxes and benefits over the life of the contract was approximately \$831K. The cost items in the agreement would need to be voted on at the Budgetary Town Meeting.

MOTION by Councilor Gilbert that the Bedford Town Council approve the Bedford DPW Teamsters, Local 633, Collective Bargaining Agreement as presented for the four-year period commencing on January 1, 2023 and concluding on December 31, 2026 and authorize the Town Manager to sign in acceptance upon passage of the financial terms of the agreement at Town Meeting on March 15, 2023. Seconded by Councilor Radke. Vote taken – Motion Passed – 7-0.

c. Other New Business

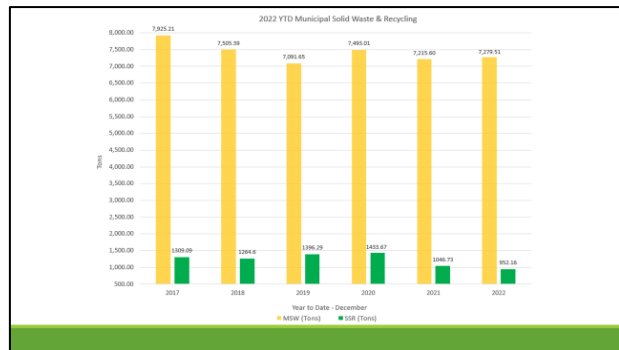
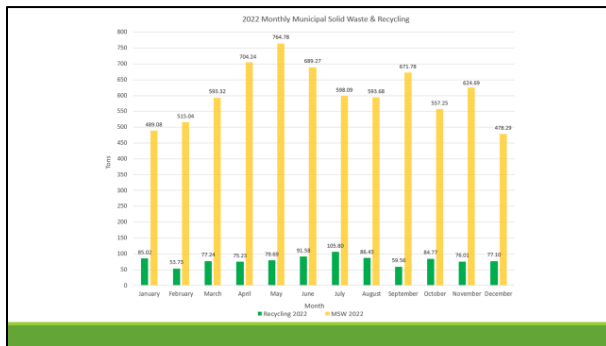
Chairman Carter read the following statement:

The Town and its citizens appreciate the service of the police officers, dispatchers and Police Department staff and that of all other Town employees in keeping our community safe, secure and well-maintained. The Town is committed to continue good-faith negotiations with the Police union and is confident that we will eventually be able to reach a mutual beneficial agreement.

6. OLD BUSINESS

a. Composting and recycling

Chairman Carter stated that he asked DPW Director Jeff Foote to start giving more information concerning composting and recycling. He put together these slides.



With the cost of the Transfer Station going up, what they can do as residents to lessen the amount that goes into the landfill and goes to recycling or composting was going to save the community and taxpayers money. He explained that most of the compost is weight, it's wet and when that's thrown into the compactor, it goes off to the landfill. That's what they get charged by ton. They were eventually going to be paying over \$130 a ton to ship it out. He would continue to work with DPW to have more numbers. The blue bins at the Transfer Station were for composting. The composting goes into the leaves and they make it fertilizer, which goes on the fields instead of chemicals.

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Public Session – December 14, 2022

MOTION by Councilor Gilbert that the Bedford Town Council approve the minutes of the December 14, 2022 Public Session. Seconded by Councilor Thomas. Vote taken – Motion Passed – 7-0.

8. TOWN MANAGER REPORT

- 1) The filing period for open elected positions is January 25, 2023 through 5 PM February 3, 2023.

Open Town Elected Positions:

- Two Town Council positions (3-year terms)
- One Town Council position (1-year term)
- One Library Trustee (3-year term)
- One Trustee of the Trust Funds (3-year term)
- One Town Clerk (3-year term)

Open School District Positions:

- Two School Board positions (3-year terms)
- One School Board position (1-year term)

Any Bedford registered voter wishing to file for office must do so by contacting Town Clerk Sally Kellar at 472-3550. As per RSA 669:19, candidates who file on the last day of the filing period shall do so in person before the Town Clerk by 5:00 PM.

- 2) The filing period for nine (9) positions on the potential Charter Commission is February 15, 2023 through February 24, 2023 (RSA 49-B:4,1(b)). Any Bedford registered voter wishing to file for the potential Charter Commission must do so by contacting Town Clerk Sally Kellar at 472-3550. As per RSA 669:19 candidates who file on the last day of the filing period shall do so in person before the Town Clerk by 5:00 PM. The filing period is very close to the Election, so it will make it challenging to get absentee ballots out, so be patient with the Town Clerk.
- 3) BCTV has launched a new application that provides direct access to its live streams and on demand content. Search "BCTV" in the Apple App Store or Google Play Store.
- 4) January 12 – Thursday Theater, "The Woman King", 2 PM, Bedford Library. Please register through the Library website.
- 5) January 12 – Thursday Theater, "The Banshees of Inisherin", 6:30 PM, Bedford Library. Please register through the Library website.
- 6) January 15 – Snowflake Shuffle road race at 9:30AM. The race will be conducted on Constitution Drive, Route 101, Liberty Hill Rd, Meetinghouse Rd and Pilgrim Drive.

- 7) January 16 – The Town Office Building, Library, and Transfer Station will be closed for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.
- 8) January 23 – The Planning Board will hold its 2nd and final public hearing on 9 proposed zoning amendments at 7 PM. One of them is a Citizens Petition. At Monday night's Planning Board meeting, the petitioner announced that they would like to withdraw that petition, so they need to get everyone who signed the petition to also sign saying they were okay to withdraw it. That was dealing with the regulation of roosters and geese on residential land.
- 9) February 4 – Educational Farm at Joppa Hill, 7th Annual Snow Ball Gala, 7 PM, Manchester Country Club.
- 10) February 7 – School District Budget Deliberative Session, 7:00 PM, Bedford High
- 11) The Bedford Winter Parking Ban runs from November 1st to April 1st, there is no parking on public roads between midnight and 8 AM.

9. COUNCILOR COMMENTS AND COMMITTEE UPDATES

Councilor Bemiss thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. She thanked the residents who experienced a delay at the Transfer Station on Saturday. There were a couple of snafus with the trucks; not any fault of the staff. She was happy that when she went to put her composting in, the entire blue bin was full. If anyone had any composting questions to call her or DPW. She attended the High School Student Senate meeting in place of Chairman Carter and they elected their student representative who would be sitting on the School Board and attending all meetings. They requested that somebody from the Town Council go and present to the seniors before voting, so they have a better understanding of what the articles were. Chairman Carter stated that Councilor Radke would be doing that on March 7th. On the Environmental Health Trust, Bedford was named as one of the seven towns with exemplary US cell tower laws.

Councilor Gilbert thanked Chief Hunter and his crew for doing a great job with the burning of the greens event at the EFJH. The EFJH SnowBall is February 4th. They still had tickets left and were also looking for anyone who would like to sponsor it, provide advertising, or provide auction items. They were having live and silent auctions. It is a sit down dinner as well as a no host bar at the Manchester Country Club. They are also having a DJ for dancing. They haven't had it since COVID, so they haven't done it in three years; the last time was February 2020. Go to their website for details.

Councilor Radke wished everyone a Happy New Year. She encouraged every to keep an eye on the dates between January, February and March with all of the Elections and everything going on. Mark your calendars for candidate declarations, the Town Meeting, Election Day, which is March 14th, followed by the Budgetary Town Meeting on the 15th.

Councilor Thomas echoed what Councilor Radke said about the next few months. A lot of people sometimes don't know when Election Day is and a lot of people don't know that they don't vote on their budget the day after Election Day. It was really important that people come out and vote on the budget.

Councilor Bandazian echoed Councilor Gilbert's comments about the SnowBall gala for EFJH. He thanked the Fire Department for conducting a great event. He expressed his

thanks to the Public Works employees who went about and beyond cleaning up after the wind storm right before Christmas.

Councilor Greazzo stated that at the Planning Board meeting there was a zoning amendment for rezoning an industrial piece of property on Rundlett Hill to residential. Strangely enough, the neighbors were opposed for various reasons. It seemed that they didn't want the property developed at all. The person that owns the property was looking to sell the property and would rather see it become more of the residential zone, because it's next to residential property detached from the industrial zone. It would be developed one way or the other, but for whatever reason the neighbors did not want to see that. They would rather have an industrial property next to their residential property.

Councilor Gilbert mentioned the outdoor skating rink at the EFJH. They've been fighting the weather, but as soon as they get authorization they will open it up.

Chairman Carter thanked everyone who came out this evening: residents, law enforcement. He thanked them for their comments and what they do for the community. He's starting the push for the 3rd annual spring CUB Clean-up Day April 15th, 9-1. It's a program that was started a couple of years ago. They take great pride keeping their roads looking the way they are.

10. NON-PUBLIC – RSA 91-A:3 II (if necessary)

11. ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION by Councilor Gilbert to adjourn public session at 7:56 PM.
Seconded by Councilor Thomas. Vote taken – Motion Passed – 7-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Dawn Boufford