

**A.T.M. – May 15, 2023 – Annual Budget, Election Terms,  
101 Russell Road purchase**

**ANNUAL TOWN MEETING & ANNUAL BUDGET MEETING  
Town of Bethany  
May 15, 2023, at 7:00 P.M.**

The meeting was called to order at 7:07 p.m. by First Selectwoman Paula Cofrancesco. There were approximately 80 people in attendance. The assembly then stood for the Pledge of Allegiance. Kimberly Brinton made an announcement about six loose cows off Round Hill Road.

Patricia Winer, a member of the Conservation Commission, presented Irene Stahl the Conservationist of the Year award. Mrs. Stahl recently donated 49 acres of open space near Briar Road to the Bethany Land Trust. The property is now known as Whispering Pines.

Paula Cofrancesco presented the annual First Selectman's Youth Award. Any Bethany youth, 18 and under, who has helped improve Bethany or assist Bethany residents, is eligible for this award. Michael Mordecai was chosen as this year's recipient for his extensive community service in the Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts. He worked on numerous events including Food Drive, Lions Club Auction, Rid Litter Day, Movie Nights, Shred-It, Spring Fling, 5k races and Fire Department BBQ.

Paula Cofrancesco called for nominations from the floor for a moderator. A motion was made by Donald Shea, seconded by John Garcia, to nominate Robert Brinton Jr. There were no further nominations. Unanimous approval by voice vote.

A motion was made by Paula Cofrancesco, seconded by Kimberly Brinton, to amend the call to add an item to the agenda concerning terms for the next municipal election.

Paula Cofrancesco – The legislature passed a new law last Wednesday allowing towns which moved from May to November elections to choose the start date for new officials. The Selectmen recommend new terms begin on the first Saturday of December following municipal elections.

There was no further discussion. The moderator called for a vote to add this item to the call of the meeting. Unanimous approval by voice vote. **Passed.**

Brent Ciccarelli made a motion, seconded by John Garcia, to establish the first Saturday of December as the date for the installation of town officials elected at the November municipal elections.

There was no further discussion. The moderator called for a vote on the motion to set a new start date for elected officials. Unanimous approval by voice vote. **Passed.**

Board of Finance Chair Sharon Huxley presented an overview of the 2023-2024 budget.

Following the presentation, the moderator introduced the first resolution on the printed call.

Item (1) on call – **BE IT RESOLVED:** To accept the 2020-2021 Annual Report and postpone the acceptance of the 2021-2022 Annual Report.

A motion was made by Richard Cogill, seconded by Elizabeth Thornquist, to discuss the resolution.

There was no further discussion. The moderator called for a vote on the resolution. Unanimous approval by voice vote. **Passed.**

John Garcia made a motion, seconded by Brent Ciccarelli, to combine voting on Items 2 to 5.

There was no further discussion. The moderator called for a vote on the motion to combine approval of Items 2 through 5. Unanimous approval by voice vote. **Passed.**

Item (2) on call – **BE IT RESOLVED:** To authorize the expenditure utilizing a portion of the Unallocated Capital Reserve to purchase a 104" Mower for Public Works in the amount of \$35,000.00.

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Item (3) on call – **BE IT RESOLVED:** To authorize the expenditure utilizing a portion of the Unallocated Capital Reserve to purchase a Trailer for the Skid Steer for use by Public Works in the amount of \$15,000.00.

Item (4) on call – **BE IT RESOLVED:** To authorize the expenditure utilizing a portion of the Unallocated Capital Reserve to purchase a steel body to upgrade an existing truck in the fleet in the amount of \$10,000.00.

Item (5) on call – **BE IT RESOLVED:** To authorize and approve a Capital Project for Renovations to Center Station utilizing a portion of the Unallocated Capital Reserve up to \$85,000.00.

Fran Doba made a motion, second by Donald Shea, to approve Items 2 through 5 on the call.

There was no further discussion. The moderator called for a vote on resolutions 2 through 5. Unanimous approval by voice vote. **Passed.**

Item (6) on call – **BE IT RESOLVED:** To authorize the use of potential TRIP grant funds to repair and repave Round Hill Road in the amount of \$430,062.00.

A motion was made by John Garcia, seconded by Elizabeth Thornquist, to discuss the resolution.

There was no further discussion. The moderator called for a vote on the resolution. Unanimous approval by voice vote. **Passed.**

Allene Kelly – What is the backup plan if we don't get the grant?

Donald Shea, Facilities/Public Works Manager– It will go in the capital plan for next year.

Item (7) on call – **BE IT RESOLVED:** To authorize the expenditure and approve a Capital appropriation for the purchase of a Pickup truck with Plow for Public Works in the amount of \$70,000.00.

A motion was made by Matthew Hubbard, seconded by Richard Huxley, to discuss the resolution.

Robert Harrison – What is the current mill rate?

Sharon Huxley, Board of Finance Chair – 36.00

There was no further discussion. The moderator called for a vote on the resolution. Unanimous approval by voice vote. **Passed.**

Item (8) on call – **BE IT RESOLVED:** To authorize the expenditure and approve a Capital appropriation for the third and final payment of a 6-yard Dump Truck for Public Works in the amount of \$80,626.00.

A motion was made by Donald Shea, seconded by Sharon Huxley, to discuss the resolution.

There was no further discussion. The moderator called for a vote on the resolution. Unanimous approval by voice vote. **Passed.**

Item (9) on call – **BE IT RESOLVED:** To authorize the expenditure and approve a Capital appropriation for Road Paving in the amount of \$350,000.00.

A motion was made by Donald Shea, seconded by James Stirling, to discuss the resolution.

Patricia Winer – Which roads are going to be paved?

Paula Cofrancesco – No roads listed right now, but in place if there is damage and need repairs.

There was no further discussion. The moderator called for a vote on the resolution. Unanimous approval by voice vote. **Passed.**

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Item (10) on call – **BE IT RESOLVED:** To authorize the expenditure and approve the purchase of a 12-yard Dump Truck with Plow (for a total of \$336,852.00) on a 3-year installment plan and the first-year Capital appropriation of \$112,284.00.

A motion was made by Sharon Huxley, seconded by Richard Huxley, to discuss the resolution.

Calen Lang – How long do we expect the dump truck to last?

Donald Shea – The truck should last 20 years.

James Rawson – Will this be an aluminum body, so it won't rust out like a steel body?

Donald Shea – Yes, it will be aluminum frame and stainless body.

There was no further discussion. The moderator called for a vote on the resolution. Unanimous approval by voice vote. **Passed.**

Item (11) on call – **BE IT RESOLVED:** To authorize the expenditure and approve a Capital appropriation for Tire Replacement for the Fire Department in the amount of \$10,000.00.

A motion was made by Amy Lestinsky, seconded by Brent Ciccirelli, to discuss the resolution.

There was no further discussion. The moderator called for a vote on the resolution. Unanimous approval by voice vote. **Passed.**

Item (12) on call – **BE IT RESOLVED:** To authorize the expenditure and approve a Capital appropriation to purchase a Replacement Brush Truck for the BVFD in the amount of \$125,000.00.

A motion was made by Richard Huxley, seconded by Matthew Hubbard, to discuss the resolution.

Calen Lang – How old is the truck we have now?

Richard Cogill, Fire Chief – The current truck is 34 years old.

Charles Oman – What is a brush truck?

Richard Cogill – It is for fighting brush fires. Designed to go off road.

Allene Kelly – Does a brush truck sweep the road?

Robert Brinton – The brush truck is used to fight forest fires. A fire truck for off road.

There was no further discussion. The moderator called for a vote on the resolution. Unanimous approval by voice vote. **Passed.**

Item (13) on call – **BE IT RESOLVED:** To authorize the expenditure and approve a transfer from the General Fund to the Land Acquisition Fund in the amount of \$100,000.00.

A motion was made by Robert Harrison, seconded by Donald Shea, to discuss the resolution.

Patricia Winer – Item 15 is a great example of why we have the Land Acquisition Fund.

There was no further discussion. The moderator called for a vote on the resolution. Unanimous approval by voice vote. **Passed.**

Item (14) on call – **BE IT RESOLVED:** To receive the report and recommendations of the Board of Finance upon the Budget of \$26,350,614.44 for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2023, and to take necessary action thereon.

A motion was made by Sharon Huxley, seconded by Donald Shea, to discuss the resolution.

Sharon Huxley made a motion, seconded by Donald Shea, to amend the amount to \$26,280,614, due to reductions after the budget hearing.

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There was no further discussion on the amendment to Item 14. The moderator called for a vote on the amendment. Unanimous approval by voice vote. **Passed.**

There was no further discussion. The moderator called for a vote on the amended budget resolution. Unanimous approval by voice vote. **Passed.**

Item (15) on call – **BE IT RESOLVED:** To authorize the Town of Bethany to purchase real property known as 101 Russell Road, Bethany CT containing +/- 3.1 acres for a purchase price of \$169,000.00 with the funds for the purchase and transaction costs coming from the Land Acquisition Fund.

A motion was made by Brent Ciccarelli, seconded by Robert Harrison, to discuss the resolution.

John Corbo – Google maps shows an existing house, cars, and boats on the property. Is the plan to purchase it with those removed, or will it be a future town expense?

Paula Cofrancesco – The owner will clean up the loose debris. Don Shea will discuss the building.

Donald Shea – Seymour Demolition quoted \$10,000 to remove the buildings. The septic tank must also be collapsed and filled for an additional \$1,200. Chemscope will conduct lead paint and asbestos testing. If anything is found, remediation will be required.

Calen Lang – Does the fire department want to burn it down for training?

Richard Cogill – Buildings are too close to the neighboring house.

Paula Cofrancesco – We have 60 days to consider the purchase, inspect and test. Lot abuts the 38.5-acre Giovanelly property the Land Trust is acquiring and provides access to Russell Road.

James Stirling – Would an amendment to say purchase price not to exceed \$169,000 be welcome?

Paula Cofrancesco – The purchase price right now is \$169,000 with letter of intent.

Vincent Marino, Town Attorney – Expense to acquire could exceed \$169,000 with closing costs.

Anthony Apuzzo – Are remediation costs included in the \$169,000? Shouldn't we find out these costs first? Concerned about remediation.

Donald Shea – Right now they are asking for \$169,000 as is. By authorizing a not to exceed figure, we can do the research and then go back to the owner.

Paula Cofrancesco – Will not purchase until we know what the issues are with the house.

Anthony Apuzzo – The owner didn't make representations about remediation?

Vincent Marino – There have been no representations since we have not gone to contract yet. The non-binding letter of intent secured the property until the town meeting could act. We have a 60-day contingency to examine and test the property.

Paula Cofrancesco – We need town approval to move forward.

Susan Bradford – The purpose of purchasing is to create access for this landlocked parcel?

Donald Shea – Not completely landlocked but improves access to Russell Road and provides a parking area.

Susan Bradford – Can we consider reselling a portion of the property to offset the cost?

Paula Cofrancesco – There are wetlands on the property.

Michael Katzmark – Why don't we amend it to say \$169,000 including remediation?

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Robert Brinton – There have been a couple of suggestions, but no motions to amend the language, not to exceed, or include remediation.

Paula Cofrancesco – Right now the asking price is \$169,000 and we requested the owner clean up any loose debris from the property.

Donald Shea – Demolition company said it would take 2 days to remove the house.

Elizabeth Thornquist made a motion, seconded by Donald Shea, to amend the resolution: “To authorize the Town of Bethany to purchase real property known as 101 Russell Road, Bethany CT containing +/- 3.1 acres for a purchase price of up to \$169,000.00, including all remediation costs, with the funds for the purchase and transaction costs coming from the Land Acquisition Fund.”

Donald Shea – This is before closing costs, not a final number?

Robert Brinton – Transaction costs are not covered in the “up to” the way it is currently worded.

There was no further discussion. The moderator called for a vote on the amendment. Unanimous approval by voice vote. **Passed.**

There was no further discussion. The moderator called for a vote on the amended resolution. Unanimous approval by voice vote. **Passed.**

Item (16) on call – **BE IT RESOLVED:** To empower the Board of Selectmen to authorize the First Selectman to enter into any approved contracts or agreements on behalf of the Town.

A motion was made by Sharon Huxley, seconded by John Garcia, to discuss the resolution.

There was no further discussion. The moderator called for a vote on the resolution. Approved by majority voice vote. **Passed.**

A motion was made by Sally Huyser, seconded by Donald Shea, to adjourn the meeting. The motion to adjourn was passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*William L. Brinton*

William L. Brinton,  
Bethany Town Clerk