

Dear Bethel

First Selectman's Update

December 22nd, 2023



Climate Action Plan

Municipal leaders from the area met this week to discuss projects that could benefit our area and qualify for grants from the EPA. If you would like to know more about the Climate Action Plan for our area or make your thoughts known with a survey, visit www.swctclimate.com.

Fire Department Study

Town leaders and members of both volunteer fire departments attended a presentation on an evaluation of our departments conducted by the consulting arm of the International Association of Fire Chiefs. While the evaluation comes with recommendations to improve our operations and plan for future apparatus, the study states "Bethel has strong leadership and an innovative vision. The departments are functioning at a high level commensurate with community expectations. While there is always room for improvement, the department is serving the citizens of Bethel very well." To all our Fire and EMS personnel, thank you for all you do!

Water Rates July 2024

The Board of Selectmen approved a water rate adjustment to begin in July, 2024. The initial plan called for a 5 year rate plan with an 8.5% increase each year for 5 years that was driven primarily by the Bergstrom Well project and planned repairs to the Maple Ave. well. After input from the public, the Public Utilities Commission and the Board of Selectmen decided to approve a 3 year plan with an 8.5% increase per year and to look more closely at the planned capital expenses in year 4 and 5 of the original plan. If you use 10,570 gal per quarter, your current rate of \$83.13 per quarter will increase by \$23.04 in year 3 for a total of \$106.17.

Town Budget

It's hard to believe we are half way through our current fiscal year, which runs from July 1st to June 30th. Our monthly budget meeting has us on track. From now through the end of May 2024, the Town department heads, the Board of Selectmen, and the Board of Finance will be working on next year's budget. Expect public hearings in May and the tentative date for the annual town budget meeting is April 4th, 2024, followed by a referendum on April 23rd. You may also want to mark your calendar for April 2nd, 2024 for a possible presidential primary.

The Big List

December is a great time to check out the Big List. The Connecticut unclaimed property program has already returned over \$1 billion, and like on the Island of Misfit Toys, there are over a billion dollars still waiting to be reunited with their rightful owners! Check out www.ctbiglist.com.

Attention Class of 2024

Attention class of 2024: The deadline to apply for the Connecticut Automatic Admission Program for high school seniors who are graduating this spring is January 4, 2024. If qualified, you can be automatically admitted to several participating colleges and universities by filling out one application form, which is available to at no cost. Visit www.ct.edu/autoadmit

Bethel Drum Circle

The Bethel Seasonal Drum Circle is being held tomorrow, December 23rd from 3 pm to 4:30 pm at the Town Hall. Bring \$5 donation (suggested) and a percussion instrument, if you have one. Email Suze@sagelead.com with questions. If the weather is cold, the event will be in the GP room.

Frozen Foot Challenge

Take the Frozen Foot Challenge! The Bethel Running Group is putting together a team for the challenge - a mile a day, walk, hike, run, outside January 1 to February 12. There is no charge and no prizes - just bragging rights and the sense of accomplishment that you've met the challenge! Join the Bethel Runners on FB or register starting Tuesday, December 26th at <https://runsignup.com/RaceGroups/126121>.

Christmas Tree Pickup

Our Bethel High School Naval JROTC cadets will be picking up Christmas Trees on Saturday, January 6th (Snow date Sunday, January, 7th). The suggested donation is \$10 and your donations support educational programs for the cadets. No tree, no problem! You can still support them at <https://www.rotc.bright-moments.com>. Remember to fill in the box at the top of the contribution page with submit your address and the number of trees to be picked up. If you would like to pay by check, email bethelnjrotcboosters@gmail.com.

Wrestling Wildcats

Use caution when you wrestle with a Wildcat! Marco Perrone, Nelson Rodriguez, Chris Menendez, Matthew Tarzia, and Lincoln Ackerman all placed in their first tournament last Saturday. Great job!

Lady Wildcats Victories

Congrats to the BHS Girls Basketball team for two big wins this week over Stratford and Amistad!

R.M.T Johnson Sing-A-Long

A shout out to Karen Neville, the students, and staff at R.M.T Johnson School for a terrific Holiday Sing-A-Long performance this week! You were amazing!

Thank you!

Thanks again to our superb highway department and Emergency Management Director for all the work getting our roads clear and power restored early this week. We were certainly ahead of some other towns in our area!

Happy Holidays!

From all of us at Town Hall, we wish you a wonderful holiday season!

Have a great weekend!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "D" and a long, sweeping tail.