

Dear Bethel

First Selectman's Update

March 21st, 2025



IMPORTANT Budget Information

The Board of Finance held a public hearing this week and deliberated on a final budget proposal. Based on testimony at the public hearing and submissions to the board, the Board of Finance restored \$250k to the proposed school budget and \$30k to the library budget, which were partially offset by other reductions in the town budget. The schools have also received a new health insurance quote and it appears their insurance cost increase will be approximately \$250k less than projected. The entire budget, town and school, represents a 5.44% increase in spending and a 4.24% estimated increase in our mil rate. (The mill rate is set by the Board of Finance after the budget is approved by referendum) You can access the budget at: <https://bethel-ct.gov/depts-compcontroller>.

The budget will be presented to the Town Meeting at the Annual Town Meeting on Wednesday, April 2nd at 7 pm at the Bethel High School. Remember "The Town Meeting" is part of our legislative body in Bethel and consists of registered voters in Bethel. Also, any citizen of the United States, 18 years or older who, jointly or severally, is liable to the town for taxes on a \$1,000 or more assessment on the October 1, 2024 grand list can also vote on the budget. The Town Meeting has the power to reduce or approve any portion of the proposed budget recommended by the Board of Finance.

Bethel Walk Audit Presentation

Sustainable Bethel presented to the Board of Selectmen the Walk Audit Summary Report completed last September. The audit addressed many issues including ADA requirements and was crucial in our application for a Safe Streets and Roads for All Grant that the town has received to assess traffic and pedestrian safety, especially along Stony Hill Rd. It is also worth noting that our Traffic Enforcement Officer and Police Commission are also looking into safety improvements. Check out the video and presentation slides from March 18th at <https://bethel-ct.gov/2025-bos>.

Affordable Housing Hearings

Planning & Zoning: Continued public hearings for 105 Milwaukee Ave. (8-30g affordable housing 12 units) and 53 Taylor Rd. (8-30g affordable housing 26 units) are scheduled for Tuesday, March 25th at 7 pm in Town Hall Meeting Room D. Learn more at <https://bethel-ct.gov/2025-zoning>

The next Office Hours is Thursday, March 27th from 7:30 am to 8:30 am. If you have a question or a concern and can't make it, please email firstselectman@bethel-ct.gov or call 203-794-8540 for an appointment.

Black Bears

It's that time of year where we begin seeing Black Bears in town. We haven't had any reported sightings to DEEP yet this year (We have had 6 Bobcats!) Learn more about Black Bears and how to report sightings at <https://portal.ct.gov/deep/wildlife/fact-sheets/black-bear>. Additional information about living with bears is available at www.bearwise.org.

Parks and Rec Spring Tennis

Parks and Recreation is offering Spring Tennis Camps and Clinics! Visit <https://bethelct.myrec.com/> and select "Programs" and then "Spring Tennis Camps and Clinics" at the bottom of the page.

Bethel Unified Penguin Plunge

Bethel UNIFIED WILDCATS are fundraising for the 2025 Brookfield Penguin Plunge! Take the plunge or join them to support Special Olympics Connecticut of CT and Bethel Unified Sports tomorrow, March 22nd at Brookfield Town Beach (460 Candlewood Lake Rd.!) Registration at 10 am, plunge at 11:30 am, awards to follow. Half of the proceeds go directly to Bethel Unified Sports! Join our team or Donate: <https://give.soct.org/team/635175>.

How Municipal Government Works

Join friends and neighbors on Tuesday, March 25th from 7:00 to 8:30 PM for a non-partisan educational event to learn how Bethel's municipal government works and how to participate. ALL Bethel residents are welcome at this event in the General Purpose Room at Town Hall. Please RSVP for this event here.

<https://forms.gle/eqyMN4mVAV8pSZBs5>.

Library Mini Golf Fundraiser

One week left until the Bethel Public Library Board of Directors' Mini Golf "fore" the Library fundraiser. On Friday, March 28, adults ages 21 and over will enjoy beer, wine, and food from local restaurants and businesses while playing a round of mini golf. On Saturday, March 29 all ages are invited to play 18 holes. Tickets can be purchased through the link:

www.bethellibrary.org/minigolf/

Parks and Rec/ERA Legally Blonde Jr.

Don't miss Parks & Rec/ERA Productions Spring production of Legally Blonde: The Musical Jr! Based on the award-winning Broadway Musical and motion picture, our 6th - 8th cast will perform on Friday, April 4th at 7 pm and Saturday, April 5th at 2 pm and 7 pm at Bethel High School.

Hazardous Waste Drop-off

Our next Household Hazardous Waste Drop-Off Day for Bethel residents is on Saturday, April 5th at the Danbury Public Works Facility at 53 Newtown Rd. from 9 am to 2 pm. It is super easy and they remove the items from your car for you. Check out what you can and can't dispose of at <https://hrra.org/household-hazardous-waste>.

Shoutouts

Congratulations to Support Local - Bethel, CT on its 5th anniversary today, March 21st! Thanks, Genée for all the support you have given our community with your FB Page!

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/supportlocalbethelct/>

A shoutout to the 2025 Town of Bethel Fire Prevention Poster Contest Winners: Thiya Bhattacharya, Fourth Grade at R.M.T. Johnson School and Suhas Banala, Fifth Grade at R.M.T. Johnson School. Thank you to the Danbury Exchange Club for your recognition of our students!

Congratulations to Emma Huedepohl who made her the 1000th career point during the state championship! What an amazing season for the team and watching the celebration and support by your teammates was priceless and shows why the Lady Wildcats are a class act!

Good luck to the staff and cadets of the BHS Naval JROTC for a fun and flawless Military Ball this evening!

Have a great weekend!

