

Dear Bethel

First Selectman's Update

March 27th, 2026



Budget Hearing

The Board of Finance (BOF) held a public hearing this week and after consideration of the comments received, no changes were made to recommended budget totals to the Town Meeting. The budget will be presented to the Town Meeting at the Annual Town Meeting on Tuesday, April 7th at 7 pm at the Bethel High School.

Remember "The Town Meeting" is part of our legislative body in Bethel and consists of all 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, 2025 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. The Town Meeting recommended budget will go to a machine vote that will likely occur on Tuesday, April 21st.

The recommended Town Operating Budget is \$40,475,162, which represents an increase of \$1,369,007 (3.5%) over last year. The recommended Board of Education budget is \$62,112,295, an increase of \$5,003,813 (6.40%). Together the total budget is a 5.24% increase and based on estimated revenue projections, our estimated mill rate will be 31.71, a 4.2% increase over the current mill rate of 30.41.

Tire Disposal

We are pleased to announce that our Transfer Station will be accepting tires soon. In 2023, the state enacted a law that required tire producers to establish state wide tire stewardship program for the collection and recycling of tires. If you recall, Bethel had a significant tire dumping issue that year which aided the passage of the law. Tire manufactures already include the cost of disposal in the cost of tires. Instead of paying a tire shop for disposal of your tires, you will be able to bring them to the transfer station for free. Once we have the container, we will send out instructions.

Aquarion Water Sale

The sale of Aquarion Water to the South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority (RWA) was approved by Connecticut Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) this week. The sale had been denied by PURA, but a successful appeal by the RWA sent it back to PURA. Our concern is debt service costs of the acquisition will increase rates for Bethel Aquarion customers between 6.5% and 8.35% annually through 2035. Also, the proposed corporate structure will form an 11 member board with 5 members representing 59 Aquarion communities and 6 members representing the 20 existing RWA communities, giving Bethel customers less influence. There is a bill before the legislature to ensure PURA has authority over the board composition, voting structure, and consumer advocacy mechanisms and it is likely that current legal efforts from communities in our area may continue. Bethel has not been a direct intervenor in any suits, but we are working closely with the Western Connecticut Council of Governments and other towns.

No Kings Downtown Tomorrow

There will be a "No Kings" event on the Town Hall lawn tomorrow, March 28th. Attendees will begin arriving around 10:30 am, there will be a march down Greenwood at 12:00 pm, and the event is scheduled to wrap up at the Town Hall 12:45 pm. If you are attending the event, please park at the Bethel Train Station at 13 Durant Ave. or the large lot behind Town Hall. Parking the Bethel Public Library will for families attending the Mini Golf fundraiser for the library.

Dueling Piano Night

Last call for The SCOTTY Fund Dueling Piano Night tomorrow, March 28th from 7 pm to 11 pm at the Summit in Danbury. If you haven't experienced dueling pianos, this is your chance and it benefits a great cause! Tickets are \$50.00 per person. Desserts will be served. Cash bar. Get tickets at <https://cbo.io/sfpiano26/tix>. If you are new to town, please take a moment to learn more about what the Scotty Fund has does for our community at <https://www.scottysfund.org/>.

Table Talks

Don't miss Table Talks this Monday, March 30th from 11 am to 12:30 pm at Daily Fare. Join friends and neighbors for a conversation about sacred texts in Judaism and Islam, the Torah & Qur'an, and how they relate to the Bible. Bring your personal reflections and questions to this open community conversation.

Spring into Art

If you enjoyed the sculptures on the Town Hall lawn, support the next Bethel Arts Sculpture Exhibit 2026-2027 at "Spring into ART" Tuesday, March 31st from 6 pm to 10 pm at La Zingara Restaurant. Enjoy an inspiring atmosphere, great food, and an art auction of works from local artists and promote art in Bethel!

Stations of the Cross Downtown

Next Friday, April 3rd, residents will be participating in the annual Stations of the Cross walk through Bethel. The walk will begin in front of Molten Java (213 Greenwood Ave) at 12 pm and conclude at the First Congregational Church of Bethel (46 Main St.) around 1:30 pm. There will be a lunch at the First Congregational Church after. Use caution driving downtown and expect cars parked around the First Congregational Church. The ecumenical event sponsored by First Congregational Church of Bethel, UCC, Bethel United Methodist Church, St. Mary's Parish, St. Thomas Episcopal Church and Walnut Hill Community Church and everyone is welcome to attend.

Stony Hill FD Flower Sale

Don't miss the Stony Hill Volunteer Fire Company's Annual Easter Flower Sale next Friday, April 3rd and Saturday, April 4th. It is a great way to add spring color to your home and help the department raise money for their ambulance replacement fund!

The Bethel BP will also be on hand to perform car seat installations and safety checks. Please call them for an appointment at 203-744-7900, but walk-ins welcome. If you can't make it on Friday or Saturday, any leftover flowers are usually available for sale on Sunday.

Interpersonal Violence

The Center for Education and Empowerment (CEE) provides support services to victims of interpersonal violence in Bethel. If you or someone you know needs help or wants to learn more, visit <https://thecenterct.org/>. If you want to support what CEE does for Bethel, they are hosting their annual dinner on April 17th up at the Amber Room. The link for the event is on the landing page at <https://thecenterct.org/>. Everyone deserves to live a life free from violence.

Shoutouts

Congrats to our Bethel Public Schools Finance Guru (Should be her real title) Jen Variale who was awarded the Rising Star Award for the State of Connecticut by the Connecticut Association of School Business Officials (CASBO)! Thanks, Jen, for all you do for our schools and town!

A big shoutout to Cpl. Gary Sorrentino of the Bethel Police Department for being selected as Officer of the Year for 2025! Congrats on the honor, you deserve it!

Congratulations Vincent Tan who has been named All American after the Adidas Indoor Nationals last weekend! Vincent finished 8th in the Pentathlon. Way to go!

A shoutout to Connor Clayton for the 12th place finish in the Adidas Pentathlon Nationals! Amazing finish!

A big thank you to the cast and crew of Chicago at BHS for the privilege of having a small part of the show and the feeling of being so welcome! Most of all, thanks for the opportunity to witness your dedication, teamwork, and talent first hand!

Have a great weekend!

