04/06/2020 SB Minutes

Bethlehem Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes

April 6, 2020
Via Zoom – Chairman Boisseau, Selectman Moore, Selectman Moritz, Selectman Caplain, Selectman Jensen.
Chairman Boisseau opened the meeting at 6:03.

He explained to mute microphones.
The Board discussed the opening of the country club.

Chairman Boisseau said it is their intent to open and run it.

Selectman Caplain said he talked with Matt Courchaine. The Governor said they can’t open until May 4th, but maintenance can begin. Selectman Caplain said Mr. Courchaine is staying on top of the rules on that.

Selectman Jensen thinks we should go forward getting it ready but reassess on May 4th. He said he wondered how people would feel if that opened but all other recreation areas are closed. Chairman Boisseau agreed and said they could add an end date to rec areas. Selectman Caplain said maybe if they closed the clubhouse but let people still play. Selectman Moritz said she thinks it will be dictated by the state and that can dictate their decision.
Bethlehem Facebook Page – Chairman Boisseau said it would be used as a vehicle to post notices. Selectman Moore said they should not allow public comments and it should be controlled by someone from the town (employee). Selectman Jensen said he posts a lot of notices on the Bethlehem NH page, but other posts bury it and said they can allow comments but have an administrator respond. Chairman Boisseau said he would worry about comments. Selectman Caplain likes the idea of a Facebook page but wonders if we should wait for the economic plan to be done. He said he worries about having comments and them being censored. Selectman Jensen said the administrator could approve comments before they were posted. Selectman Moritz said she would like to get input from NHMA on comments and 91A. Selectman Jensen said lawyers are conservative and stay away from any possible trouble. Chairman Boisseau said he would be more comfortable with using it as a bulletin board. Selectman Moore agreed. Chairman Boisseau said they can revisit this after Sullivan Creative is finished and get their input. Chairman Boisseau asked how the Board would handle putting things up on it. Selectman Jensen offered to be that person and said the rest of the Board could add things also and April and Nicole. Selectman Caplain said Mary Jackson too. Selectman Jensen said he doesn’t see why it would be a legal issue. Selectman Moritz moved to go forward with Facebook page for info only with no comments after Selectman Caplain speaks with NHMA and April speaks with Primex. Selectman Jensen seconded.

Dann asked about the difference between Facebook and email. Chief Anderson said he thinks it is a good idea. Roll call – all.
The Board discussed the Highway Dept working a split shift to maintain the health of the employees. Selectman Jensen said he is good either way. Mr. Jackson said doesn’t have them all together right now anyways. Selectman Caplain said he thought they already discussed it and left it up to Mr. Jackson. Selectmen Moritz and Moore said they thought the same thing.

Mr. Jackson said it is all working so far and just wants to know what to do as it ramps up. Selectman Moritz said she trusts Mr. Jackson to do what is right for his department. Selectman Caplain said the decision is his including if it is a rainy day, he can decide to have them stay home and said the Governor is expecting things to get worse so is encouraging everyone to be smart. Mr. Jackson said they will get far behind if they do miss hours. He will keep going forward at this point. He said he can encourage employees to use PTO time. Selectman Moore trusts Mr. Jackson on this. There was discussion on how it will be determined if it is covid related. Mr. Jackson said it will be if they take time off because they want to. Dick Robie said he talked with Mr. Jackson today about this and said Bethlehem is just waking up from winter and there is sand still on the road. He said he doesn’t understand the staggered schedule. He also said they will fall behind but has full faith in Mr. Jackson. Mr. Robie also mentioned there is cold patching that could be done. Chairman Boisseau said the Board does support Mr. Jackson fully and said some things probably won’t get done due to situation. Chris McGrath said he doesn’t believe taxpayers should pay for employees that are not working.
TAN – The Board has multiple questions about this including what the interest rate is, what is our cash flow, can we get reimbursed due to it being covid related. The Board tabled this to ask the Treasurer to attend so the Board will know how much we need and the length of cash flow issues. Selectman Moritz said they need to look at budget and see where cuts can be made and to also look at budget for next year and forecast revenues.
Forgiving tax interest – The Board discussed if they should consider forgiving interest for late tax payments. Selectman Moore talked with Mary Jackson about Governor order to waive interest for 2020 1st issue bill. Selectman Moore explained interest can be waived if provisions are uniform and don’t raise equal protection issues and said it can’t be done case by case. Mrs. Jackson usually sends out the tax bills in mid-May. There was discussion about having to tax, this is only if people are late paying this tax bill and interest will not accrue. Chairman Boisseau asked what the Board would set. Selectman Moore said they could set time limits, amount limits, etc. and said the interest is 8% for late payments. Selectman Jensen asked about the financial impact and was told that is not determined yet. Mrs. Jackson said the impending lien notices are not being sent out yet. The Board tabled this discussion until May 11th. Donna Devlin said she is a concerned citizen and has been following tax interest subject because that is her biggest bill. There was discussion about how Conway is dividing tax bills into 4 equal parts and at the end of 4 months that is when the interest would begin and some towns are doing no tax interest for 3 months, others 4 months. Etc. Mrs. Devlin also said sewer payments here also would be helpful to get some relief. Selectman Moore said Mrs. Jackson has always been great working with taxpayers about making payments.
Covid 19 – Governor has shut down all hotels etc., for health workers and expects to make decision around 10 days before May 4th on whether students will be going back to school.

Selectman Moore said she called a couple of people in town to check on them and they were really grateful for the call. She explained they are calling people who may need groceries or medication picked up.

Chairman Boisseau said the signs are hung up at the baseball fields.
Public Input

Chris McGrath said he is curious with library being closed are the employees still being paid. Selectman Moritz suggested he email the library trustees.
Selectman Moore said she has been trying to get ahold of Mike at Profile Technologies and he called back, and they are about a month behind in their work so he hasn’t done anything yet on the phone assessment. The Board discussed Verizon being able to add something to phone system to be able to forward calls. Board all agreed to go forward with the call forwarding/20.00-month option. Selectman Moore said she will send out scope of work from Mike Labonte to Board.
At 7:33 Chairman Boisseau moved to go into non-public session per RSA 91A-3 II for personnel. Selectman Caplain seconded. Chairman Boisseau did roll call with all members agreeing to go into non-public session.

The Board discussed pay increases for country club employees; 1.00 increase for one and 1.50 for the other. It was stated that Matt Courchaine is not bringing another employee back so will have the money. Selectman Moritz said she thinks it is fantastic if he will be saving money and eliminating a position. Chairman Boisseau agrees and moved to rehire Dave Adamuska and Logan Brown to CC and agreed to the rate increases. Selectman Caplain seconded. Chairman Boisseau did roll call with all members in favor.

At 8:01 Chairman Boisseau moved to adjourn. Selectman Moritz seconded. Roll – all.
Respectfully submitted,

April Hibberd

Administrative Assistant