06/08/2020 SB Minutes

Bethlehem Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes

June 8, 2020
Via Zoom – Chairman Boisseau, Selectman Moore, Selectman Moritz, Selectman Caplain, Selectman Jensen.

Meeting opened at 6:00. Chairman Boisseau reminded people to mute their microphones when not talking.

Gazebo Concerts – tabled until next week. Will be discussing other recreation topics next week as well including rec properties opening. Selectman Caplain said he would follow up about concerts and said AG’s office said they are not permitted at this point, so it is good to wait a week to make decision.

Mural Project – Selectman Moritz said the email was very thorough and thinks it is a good idea. Selectman Jensen said the person asking for this should be here to answer questions. Selectman Moritz asked what questions he has. She said Littleton Recreation has approved it. Chairman Boisseau said they are 5×8 and they are to honor essential workers – cashiers, medical workers, etc. Selectman Caplain said it fits in with Bethlehem; it is whimsy and fun. Chairman Boisseau asked the Board if they were comfortable with them being up. Selectman Moore asked how long they would be up for and said it would be nice for her to be here to answer questions. Selectman Jensen said the last time they approved ads they didn’t end up liking the banners and asked if there was a way to see them first. Chairman Boisseau said they are collecting donations for local programs affected by Covid-19. He said he thinks it is a great project and is in favor but how would like to know how many and where they will be. Selectman Caplain asked if they can approve contingent on how many and where. Selectman Jensen said they could wait a week to get their questions answered. Chairman Boisseau said he could reach out to Jessica to ask the questions. Selectman Moritz offered to contact her. She will be asked to attend next week. Mike Bruno likes Selectman Jensen’s thoughtfulness about getting more information because the public cannot see the information. Chris McGrath and Rita Farrell agrees with waiting. Tabled until next week.

Façade Grant – Chairman Boisseau said the Board has been discussing if allowing businesses to utilize this (matching grant) to help with Covid-19 related expenses. Paul Greenlaw said the revolving loan fund, which is a low interest loan, which NCIC manages and is for businesses who need money over and above what they can get from their local lender. He said it can be used as a gap funding. He feels this is more appropriate than using the façade grant. Chairman Boisseau said he was concerned with changing the intent of the warrant article. Selectman Caplain said he brought it up because he was asked about it but said the low interest loan would be a way to help them and a viable option. Mr. Greenlaw said there is approximately 130,000 – 135,000 in it and Mary Jackson and Jo Presby are on the committee with him. He said NCIC makes the recommendation if the loan should be given. Selectman Jensen asked if the Board has the ability to offer 0% rate loans. Mr. Greenlaw will check on that. Mr. Greenlaw spoke about other resources for businesses including from the state. Rita Farrell asked them to look into the history of the revolving fund which was founded by Len Reed and then will find out the purpose of it. Selectman Moritz said they changed the façade grant last year from 3,000 to 5,000. Mr. Greenlaw will get more information and get it to the Board.

Opening the Town Building – Chairman Boisseau said the Board needs to get input from town employees about that. Selectman Moore said Mary Jackson would like a secure dropbox and said there is a system for incoming and outgoing traffic. There was discussion about how it will look to open the office. Talked about limited hours, plexiglass, mandatory masks. Selectman Caplain will research getting an expert on how to best do that. He will contact the state. Selectman Jensen said he could reach out to the health consortium. The Board said there isn’t a rush and will be a long-term issue so want to research and do it right. Mr. McGrath asked about the no mask thing and asked if they would get arrested. Selectman Moritz said they would be asked to come back when they have one.

Budget Cuts – Chairman Boisseau said they have asked departments in the past to look at their budgets and make 5% or 10% cuts and has been difficult because it is already so tight. The pool not opening and the concerts not happening are cuts. Selectman Jensen said we may have to cut more but it is not going to be easy. Selectman Caplain said we should ask the department heads to come back and report on savings from any changes. Board should look at Covid expenses and how much we will get reimbursed for. Will need to also look at the tax revenue that comes in also to see where they are at. Selectman Moritz said Tim already did that with his budget and with pool not opening it was a savings of approx. 40,000. She said Chief Demoranville also looked at his and will have a savings with the change of prosecutor. Selectman Caplain said it should all be reported together and also said the extra amount budgeted for fuel will not need to be used now. Chairman Boisseau said that is a good idea because there are some little amounts like the amount for the parking lot and those little amounts could add up. Review Covid expenses and make sure we are not spending more than we will get back. Give the department heads 2 weeks to review their budgets. Board members will contact their department heads. Mr. McGrath said cancelling the rec program doesn’t save money because we are still paying the rec director salary and the other fees are paid from the revenue. Mike Bruno asked if the Planning Board and Library are included in the departments. Chairman Boisseau said if the library doesn’t have a meeting within 2 weeks hopefully, they can get it to us as soon as they have their next meeting. Barry Zitser suggested a revenue enhancer to offset lost tax revenue. Selectman Jensen will put in the newsletter.

Public Input – Dick Robie said he saw 8 – 9 kids sitting on the bank by the courts together and thinks the courts should be opened. Highway department once a week mows the ballfields, town building, etc. and said maybe if we are paying for employees to stay home a lesson should be done on mowing the lawns. Selectman Moritz said the Recreation Director is not staying home and also said he helps other departments a lot and the highway department has always mowed because they have the equipment. She said we will be discussing opening the courts that will need to be cleaned etc. Selectman Moritz also said parents stand behind him and his job has changed but he is not sitting at home. Mr. Robie asked if the country club is a done deal and if it sold. Selectman Caplain said it is not a done deal and said we have an interested party, but nothing is a done deal until cash exchanges hands. Mr. Robie asked if the public would have a say. Mr. Robie also said they have not opened their office yet. He said they ordered plexiglass for the village district office and they are about $200.00.

Mr. McGrath requested to be on the agenda for next week to discuss opening the summer rec program. He said he will get the info to the Board on Friday morning.

Other – Selectman Caplain said Sullivan Creative will have some draft logos soon so he will have those next week and discuss them on Monday.

Selectman Moore met with the highway department about Lehan Road and they will move the speed limit sign and add another sign. She mentioned the flower beds to the CC and will discuss it with them on the 25th.

Minutes 06/01/20 – Selectman Caplain moved to approve. Selectman Jensen seconded. Roll call – all – motion carried.

At 7:26 Chairman Boisseau moved to go into non-public session per RSA 91 A for matters of real estate, reputation and personnel. Selectman Caplain seconded. Roll call – all – motion carried.

Selectman Moritz moved to approve pay increases for the highway dept. Selectman Moore seconded. Roll call – all – motion carried.

The Board discussed the country club.

The Board discussed concerns reported.

At 8:15 Chairman Boisseau moved to adjourn. Selectman Moritz seconded. Roll call – all – motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

April Hibberd

Administrative Assistant