Bethlehem Board of Selectmen

 Meeting Minutes

August 31, 2020

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

Chairman Boisseau opened the meeting at 6:00 and reminded people to leave their microphones on mutes.

**PUBLIC INPUT**

Chris McGrath -Noticed that there are a lot of things that need to be repaired – ceiling fell in at the Town Building, towers are crumbling by the police dept. is there money in the budget to repairs these. Selectman Moritz said some of the repairs are being done. Selectman Caplain said he will be doing a walk through and making a list of items needed to be repaired. Chairman Boisseau said this would be a good agenda item for the future. Selectman Moritz said budget time would be a good time to look at that and suggested November. Selectman Caplain said he could do it by November and prioritize the list. Selectman Jensen said we put extra money in the budget for this year for gas that we won’t end up needing. Mr. McGrath asked if the ballfields are maintained by the rec department and said they are overgrown. Selectman Moritz said it is the highway dept.

**Update of Bethlehem Country Club** – This Board has been working on this for 3-4 years. Selectman Caplain said things have moved quick since last week. The Koprowski’s signed the P&S and the Board met in NP before the meeting and signed it as well. He said it has been a long process and tried to get the essence of what the people wanted. He said he thinks it is a good deal for the town and also the Koprowski’s. He said people in town wished there could have been a public hearing before signing the P&S but attorney said they couldn’t do that. He said the Board did have the Koprowski’s in to talk about it and have been as transparent as possible. Selectman Caplain also said their intention is to keep it a golf course and is being sold for $425,000 and they are willing to keep the snowmobile trail in the back of the property accessible for people to use. The town has agreed to do a survey of the property. It was important to the Koprowski’s to talk about energy efficient savings projects for the town and they discussed that at a former meeting when they came in to discuss a solar array project and they hope to have more discussion about that. Chairman Boisseau said KW was hired to market the course but then were no longer marketing it when the Koprowski’s came forward. Selectman Caplain ended up taking on that responsibility and saving the town a lot of money. Chairman Boisseau thanked him for all his work as well as the rest of the Board for their work and former boards. The Board has taken their time and had warrant articles to try to make sure they were doing what the people wanted them to do. They could have sold it without getting any input but really wanted to hear what the people wanted. Selectman Jensen wanted to thank Selectman Caplain for all his work and expressed how much work it involved. Selectman Caplain said it was a win win for both sides. Selectmen Moritz and Moore thanked Selectman Caplain too. Kim Koprowski said they are thrilled and glad they can now move forward. She thanked Selectman Caplain for all his work. Selectman Caplain thanked Kim also. Dick Robie said he has asked many times about a public hearing and every time was told there would be a public hearing. He said he doesn’t understand why a public hearing would happen after it is final. He said he is not against this but thinks if the Board truly listens to people, they would change their minds about things. He said he hopes this isn’t the future where 5 people decide things for 2500 people. He said after the Koprowski’s came to a few meetings with the Village District they realized the District was on their side. Chairman Boisseau said this is something that has been on the agenda for 4 years and gone to the voters of Bethlehem numerous times to get their thoughts on what is being done with the course. He feels they have followed through with what people have voted on and heard from having discussions with people. The Board could have sold the course without any public input or discussion and commends the Board for doing what the voters want and not what 5 people want. Mr. Robie said his opinion is that someone should have told him long ago that there would not be a public hearing. Selectman Jensen said they worked on first warrant article together and the town has voted 3 – 4 times and the town has voted to allow them to do exactly what they have done and unfortunately they cannot have the public hearing prior. Selectman Moritz said they did have 2 public hearings. Mr. Robie said he should have been told a month ago. Chairman Boisseau said the Board has solicited a lot of opinions from the town on this and went with the directive of the town, had at least 2 public hearings, had the Koprowski’s in, had multiple warrant articles, and he thanked the Board for all their work on this.

**Mary Polaski – backpacks** – Was not at the meeting

**Proposed face covering ordinance** – Came up as a topic of discussion where we will be having a public hearing for littering so could have this public hearing the same night if they choose to go forward with it. Chairman Boisseau said it is a good time also due to school opening with kids going back and kids wearing masks at school and practicing social distancing. He explained some of the highlights of the proposed ordinance. Selectman Caplain said he struggles with this and said they have gotten more conservative with wearing masks and protecting themselves but not sure if he is in favor of this. He said it should the business that requires them and the Board support the business. He said then the person can make the decision to go into the business based on that. Selectman Moore agrees with Selectman Caplain. Selectman Moritz said if the general consensus is that it is not necessary, she is fine with that. There was discussion about not wanting the police to have to police it. Selectman Jensen said it may be something they want to revisit and also said he would like to hear what the public has to say about it. Chairman Boisseau said it does say some something about government buildings in the ordinance and protecting town employees and the numbers will probably increase during flu season and would like to be proactive. Agrees with businesses having the choice but wonders about requiring them for town buildings. Selectman Caplain asked if we need one for town buildings because there is already a mask rule to wear one to enter the town building. They were told people come in without masks and are face to face with employees to tell them to put a mask on. Chief Anderson said he would hesitate to make an ordinance on this and have survived the summer with an influx of tourists and have only had 3 cases in Bethlehem. He said most people are respectful about wearing masks. He suggested the Board look down the road to make sure they don’t create unintended consequences. He said they should develop one in case they need it if cases rise. Allegra Wright said she feels strongly about it and concerned with upcoming flu season and asked if the BB court is open. She said people are getting comfortable now and people need to know that flu and coronavirus together is scary. She is worried we won’t act quickly enough. Robert Consentine asked what teeth a business has to enforce requiring a mask and would an ordinance help them enforce that. Selectman Moritz suggested getting feedback from businesses. Selectman Moore said she was in Shaw’s and everyone she saw had a mask on but then at Home Depot there was someone without one, but no one said anything to the person. Selectman Jensen said the businesses could always call the police if someone is not following the rules of the business. Mr. McGrath thinks it should be up to businesses. He said he was afraid they would be required to wear one all the time. He suggested having a marijuana ordinance because Twin Mtn has one and they make a lot of money from it. Kim Johnson agrees with no ordinance and said they have not seen an uptick and wants to see common sense and let people make their own decision. It should be peoples right to choose. Chairman Boisseau said cases are low because they have been careful. Selectman Moritz said what April submitted is fine for a future ordinance if it is needed. Selectman Caplain said having it ready if needed is a good idea. Chairman Boisseau said we can have a public hearing on it if they decide it is needed.

**Dept. of Transportation repaving of Route 302** starting at Trudeau Road going into Twin Mtn – just an FYI and not happening for at least a year.

**Rec Update** – Tim Fleury said they will be operating the after-school program confined to just the gym and outside from 1:30 – 5:00. He will be looking for more counselors. He said they will be prescreened by the school so that will be helpful. Mr. Fleury said he is still looking at billing and registration to determine whether to charge by multi-day, weekly etc. He doesn’t think it makes sense to allow drop ins this year. There will be a lot of hand washing and spending as much time outside as possible. Soccer is still planned for the fall, but they will not be playing against other towns. He said they will play the less risky sports only. Mr. Fleury said he is all for the skate park. He said he hates to lose the full ice rink but said it has issue that make it hard to make ice anyways. He said a nice location for an ice rink may be where the old community gardens were. He would have to check the area out. Discussion about ages that counselors need to be, and the hours needed to work. There was also discussion about kids being allowed if they don’t attend the elementary school. It was determined homeschoolers could probably also attend.

**Primary Update** – absentee ballots will start being process on Thursday.

**Highway equipment** – Haven’t heard back yet on this. Tabled.

**Legal Files** – Need to make decision on what to do with the files. The files do have notes from the attorney. They have been stored at a climate-controlled facility. To shred them it would be $350.00 ish. Haven’t been able to find a climate-controlled facility up here. Selectman Moritz hates the idea of throwing out expensive legal documents that might be beneficial but who has the time to go through all the boxes. Selectman Caplain asked about scanning them and asked about finding a company that can do that. Selectman Jensen said he agrees about keeping them and thinks they should investigate digitizing them. Chairman Boisseau agrees he would want to review them before they are thrown out. Selectman Moritz said they could find any storage facility up here because it wouldn’t be long term storage so they wouldn’t need climate control. Board wants to determine if our attorney can recommend a digitizing company and a storage facility that he uses. Harry recommended White Mtn. Digital Media. We will reach out to them.

**OTHER**

Selectman Caplain said Scott Himmer reached out to him about the **sign near the Visitor Center**. He said there are political signs on it which there shouldn’t be, and he offered to repair the sign. Selectman Moore said Clare Brown from the Heritage wants it gone and were hoping it would be with the Culvert project. Chairman Boisseau asked if Mr. Himmer would remove it. Selectman Caplain said he could ask him. There was a suggestion to move it in front of the town building for posting things. Selectman Caplain said he would have to check with Mr. Himmer. Selectman Moore will check with Mrs. Brown to confirm the Heritage doesn’t want it. Selectman Jensen said there was a question about signs near the golf course property and they are on the right of way.

Selectman Moritz said Jack Anderson has been working on the submittal for the **GOFFER grant**. **Selectman Moritz moved to authorize Jack Anderson to sign the GOFFER Grant on behalf of the town. Selectman Caplain seconded. Roll call – all – motion carried.**

**Minutes from 08/24/20** – **Selectman Caplain moved to approve the minutes. Selectman Moritz seconded. Roll call – all – motion carried.**

**At 7:36 Chairman Boisseau moved to adjourn. Selectman Caplain seconded. Roll call – all – motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

April Hibberd

Administrative Assistant