Bethlehem Board of Selectmen

 Meeting Minutes

November 2, 2020

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

Chairman Boisseau opened the meeting at 6:00 pm. He explained the meeting is a work session to discuss **Covid-19** so they can get ahead of it due to the cases rising. Chairman Boisseau said he wants to discuss protocols in place and discuss if new ones need to be done and to discuss it with department heads. Chief Anderson said we need to take a step back and reiterate our procedures. He said we need to be more careful and with winter coming it can be more contagious. The Chief said he is disheartened by the State of NH because he knows of confirmed cases, but they are not showing up in our numbers. He said we have had some incidents with our police and fire departments. He explained they are taking precautions by wearing masks and will be getting tests and results will be back within 24 hours. Chairman Boisseau asked with winter coming if the highway department employees would also be able to get results in 24 hours. The Chief said possibly and said they need to be 1 man per truck. He also said the rapid test is only if you have symptoms. The chief also said he is upset with Primex because they want us to do contact tracing. Selectman Jensen asked if that was a state function and the Chief said the state sent it to him and want him to do it. He said he is not trained to do contact tracing and the state should do it. There was discussion about getting tests done and if there is a cost if an employee doesn’t have insurance. The Chief said the town will pay for test for employees who do not have insurance. Brett Jackson, Road Agent, said his crew will be in close proximity to each other in the winter. He said they will clean the facility often and will be one guy per truck. Chairman Boisseau said schools are screening every day – taking temperatures at the door. Mr. Jackson said he knows of another highway dept. that did that in the spring. Selectman Jensen asked if the highway guys are wearing masks. Mr. Jackson said they hadn’t been but are starting to and will going forward. Selectman Moritz asked him about a split crew with one week on/one week off and asked who he would call if his whole dept. is out. Mr. Jackson said there really isn’t anyone because other towns have their own stuff going on. Chief Anderson said they need to set up a guideline for employees who are sick. Selectman Moritz said in March it was quarantine or negative test. Chairman Boisseau said for school you have to be symptom free for 24 hours and quarantine for 10 days. Selectman Jensen said a friend who works in an office wasn’t feeling well and infected 15 people in the office. Chairman Boisseau said test are more available and asked if they should require employees to take a test. It was pointed out they were required to stay home for 14 days if they didn’t take a test. Selectman Moritz said in March they said it wouldn’t affect vacation time. Mr. Jackson has someone that is out for a couple of months then they come back and have a month of vacation time. Chief Anderson recovered some of that expense from the GOFERR grant for employees that were out due to lack of childcare etc. He also said they need a policy for Covid related issues. The Chief said there are employees who work from home that take advantage of it and it causes a negative moral issue. Chairman Boisseau said there should be a requirement that town employees get tested. The Board agreed employees should not have to use Paid Time Off time. Selectman Moritz said if they have a negative test they can go back to work quicker. The Chief said people start to go back to work when they start to feel better. There was discussion about when an employee with a positive test result can go back to work. It was determined they could not go back to work until DHHS deems they can. There was discussion about screening daily for temperature and questions. Selectman Moritz said people need to be self-aware and don’t need to be doing check-ups on employees. Selectman Moore said each department head should talk to their employees and said masks are mandatory. Selectman Moritz said the department head decides what is best for their department on temperature check. Mr. Jackson asked what to do if an employee refuses to get a test and was told they need to be sent home. Selectman Moritz said any childcare issue the employee can work from home and will be covered by the town. Chairman Boisseau said it is possible the schools may close down for periods of time. Mr. Jackson said that will affect two of his guys. Chief Anderson said they may need to budget for time off. He also said he thinks things will change after the election. Selectman Moritz asked him how people will not have it anymore.

Chief Anderson said they are fortunate to have recovered what they have so far from the grant. Selectman Jensen said they should keep track of employees that are off to get reimbursed.

The Board discussed – employees not feeling well need to have a negative test or 24 hours symptom free. If exposed - also 14 days from last day of potential exposure.

The board discussed the possibility of closing the town building. Selectman Moritz said they need to be fluid and if the building needs to be shut down then they will do it. She said the same thing for the rec department. Chairman Boisseau asked the board about employees that can work remotely if they should, to limit exposure and to have town building be appt. only with restricted hours. Selectman Moore said depends on someone’s comfort level also and if able they can work from home. Selectman Moritz said if they go to appointment only it makes it easier for contact tracing.

The Chief said they have done well in the town building and people are wearing masks. He also said people are not spending a lot of time in the building. He explained some employees like the town clerk and the planning clerk need personal contact with people. Selectman Jensen said they have larger plastic shields for the election and could those be used in the office after the election. It was determined the town building will remain the same for now and they can have a quick meeting if need be.

Selectman Jensen talked about a memo to the employees. Mr. Jackson said having it in writing would be helpful.

Chairman Boisseau said they will be having a lot more discussions on this moving forward.

**At 7:04 Chairman Boisseau moved to go into non-public session per RSA 91A:3 II for matters of personnel. Selectman Moore seconded. Roll call – all – motion carried.**

**The Board discussed a proposed new hire. Selectman Moritz moved to hire Ava Garneau for the after-school program. Chairman Boisseau seconded. Roll call – all – motion carried.**

**At 7:18 Chairman Boisseau moved to adjourn. Selectman Moore seconded. Roll call – all – motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

April Hibberd

Administrative Assistant