Bethlehem Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes

December 20, 2021

In person – Chairman Boisseau, Selectman Hibberd, Selectman Jensen, Selectman Morris, Selectman Caplain.

Chairman Boisseau opened the meeting at 6:07pm and reminded people to leave their microphones on mute. He continued to remind in person participants to use the microphone so Zoom participants can hear

**Public Input:**

**Dick Robie –** clarification – Are political signs allowed in town halls? Must be in specific area on election day, does it apply now? – Selectman Morris – discussed prior to meeting but determined wasn’t an election and rules for elections didn’t apply. -

**EV Charger discussion –**

**Selectman Caplain –** Energy Commission – grants available, $30k to put in fast charging station – would like to apply for it – There is a questions of location; either pool parking lot or basketball court parking lot. The board discussed merits of both locations.

Selectman Caplain made a motion to authorize the Energy Commission to move forward with the grant application and install the 2 EV chargers at the pool parking lot subject to planning/zoning rules and feasibility. – Selectman Morris seconded – roll call – all – motion passed.

**Selectman Boisseau made a motion to open section as a public hearing to accept unanticipated funds – Selectman Hibberd seconded – roll call all – motion passed**

**Chairman Boisseau –** Health Trust - $10,339.42 in returned health care funds, Solar project grants - $60k and $65k.

**Chairman Caplain made a motion to accept all 3 unanticipated funds – Selectman Morris seconded – roll call – all – motion passed**

**Selectman Morris –** Proposed the board send a formal letter to NH Charitable to thank them. Selectman Caplain agreed. Selectman Morris will draft letter.

**Chairman Boisseau made a motion to close public hearing – Selectman Morris seconded – roll call all – motion passed**

**Police Department purchase from capital reserve fund**

Chairman Boisseau – purchase 1 set of body armor for $746.30

**Selectman Caplain made a motion to purchase the body armor from the capital reserve fund. – Selectman Hibberd seconded - roll call – all – motion passed.**

**Public information gathering on trucking route for proposed Dalton Landfill – limited to Bethlehem residents and taxpayers only. 3-minute time limit, one statement per speaker.**

**Chairman Boisseau –** The board discussed this as an opportunity to gather input from the community on the proposed trucking routes for the proposed Dalton landfill. Ground rules: 3-minute time limit, 1 statement per speaker, residents and taxpayers only, speakers can reiterate points, but the board would prefer speakers do not repeat similar talking points. Speakers can submit statements to admin@bethlehemnh.org instead of speaking publicly. The discussion is limited to the proposed trucking traffic to the proposed Dalton landfill, not the landfill itself. Selectman Caplain will time speakers.

**Randy Smith** – Whitefield RD, Bethlehem – Traffic increased on rt. 116 will increase accidents. There are already logging trucks on the road and there is a concern for the current speed of the trucks. Speeding with more trucks will increase accidents.

**Chuck Phillips** – Longfellow Dr, Bethlehem – This would be a reversal on dollars and efforts promoting Bethlehem for tourism. There are 8 crosswalks in town and parking on both sides of Main St. Pedestrian traffic in downtown area has increased. Frequently cars do not follow speed limit and do not stop at crosswalks. Trucks will bring noise, smell, and danger.

**Katherine Darges** – Trucks will be a problem. People will be hesitant to spend money in Bethlehem with trucks idling and waiting to stage at landfill. Can’t trust Casella to keep limit low, underestimate a lot of things. Long Hill will be an issue with trucks coming up and down the hill. It is currently tough in the winter. Is Casella aware of the danger in winter of the hill? Concerned about truck accidents on long hill.

**Fred Apple** – taxpayer – since 2015 – own property on Main St – Dec 15th article in the Littleton Courier – The beauty and charm of the town is why we live in Bethlehem. Why would the select board support hauling trash through town? The board needs to listen to resident concerns for future residents and keeping charm of town. Thank you for allowing me to speak tonight. Hopes it doesn’t move forward.

**Ian Dowling** – owner of Rek-lis and live in town – resident since 2004 – The town is in the process of an amazing transformation. It is a destination area and is flooded with people during high tourism months. Truck traffic is a current problem. Loud and disruptive to town traffic. Adding more trucks will make problem worse. Trucks smell and drop refuse along the way. Rek-lis has 100 seats outside and loud smelly trucks will disturb patrons and drive business away. BTA – mountain bike group – working hard to bring trails to area. Economic development needed to transform town to bring more development in. When the trail building is done, they will cross 302 in 3-4 places. More trucks will increase danger. Bad idea to bring trucks through town

**Cheryl Jensen** – Been doing annual roadside cleanups since 2007. Heard from people cleaning on Rt 3 that there is always a problem with refuse flying from trucks. It will be on Main St in Bethlehem now. There is a trash issue with the proposed truck traffic.

**Martin Glavic** – Cherry Valley RD – Agree on increased traffic. When the board writes the letter, he asked to check number of trucks before sent. It’s important to get numbers correct so the town sounds credible. Reminded residents and route 116 residents that Bethlehem has a landfill currently and has room to expand to get trucks off of downtown area. Understands this is not the forum to discuss expansion, but to keep traffic of Main St and 116, it is an option. Reiterated checking numbers on the letter. Selectman Jensen – numbers are cited from DES and DOT and John Gay from Casella – Mr. Glavic wants to make sure numbers are correct and not to take numbers provided by audience members. Agrees that it is a good idea to keep traffic from the downtown area.

**Julie Seeley** - Follow up on Mr. Glavic – Important to get an accurate number, not looking just at current numbers but future as well. Shocked at 140,000 tons/year at current landfill. Tonnage pulled back in recent years, but the tonnage keeps growing. The permit doubled amount of tonnage. Extrapolate future traffic if rate of growth continues. Last permit Stage 5 - 280,000tones/year, average much higher. Could be higher numbers than what they are saying.

**Brian Cook** – Main St – Increased traffic in the downtown is a bad idea. Not sure what pull the town has on DES. The current truck traffic to the Bethlehem landfill do not use downtown Bethlehem. Why is it an option now with the new proposed landfill? Letter can propose current routing if Dalton happens.

**Rita Farrell** – Casella Waste co Inc has an active landfill in Bethlehem located on the Ammonoosuc river. 2 trucks crashed on rt 3, the Casella trucks were routed through town while accident was cleaned up. A line of trucks in town came to stop in town during the accident. Crossing 302 in Bethlehem became impossible. Bumper to bumper traffic when trucks routed through town. The Heritage society was blocked by traffic. There is history in town. Glaciers carved the Bethlehem valley. Why trade discovery, science, beautiful views for trash trucks. – board stopped at 3-minute mark-

**Dick Robie** – Came tonight as residents have dealt with this for 40 years. Not many residents in town that love Bethlehem more. Main St route is longer. Trucks cost $500k plus more. It is the worst road to Bethlehem. In the late 70’s a survey was done by UPS. Bethlehem was the middle of the service area but Twin Mountain was better due to better road conditions. Doesn’t think as many trucks will come through Bethlehem.

**Chris Dupont** – property at 824 Whitefield Rd – across from Chicks Sand and Gravel – There have been fatal accidents there recently. Reiterating what Randy Smith has said with traffic issues. Police officer out of state for 24 years. Accidents are from 50-100ft from the proposed entrance. Lack of enforcement of traffic is an issue in that area. It is a recipe for disaster

**Sue Greenlaw** – Chairman Boisseau read statement:

“As the principal at Bethlehem Elementary School, I am extremely concerned about a possible increase in traffic traveling through the town of Bethlehem. Trucks and other traffic already pass by the elementary school at very unsafe speeds. Crossing 302, even with a crossing guard, often feels unsafe due to the speed and distractibility of drivers. Adding a large number of trucks to the already busy route could create a dangerous situation for our students.

Please take the route through the town of Bethlehem off the table not only for our students but also for the safety of our beautiful and thriving community. I am a resident of Bethlehem and have been for over thirty years. Our community is poised for positive growth and is becoming a destination spot. It would be shortsighted of us to make any decisions that would negatively impact this positive growth. To the trucks traveling through town, we are just a route they are traveling.

Please do not make a decision that could negatively impact us for years to come!”

**Kristina Zontini** - South Rd – If approved, is there oversite to the number of trucks traveling on route, is there any enforcement? – Selectman Jensen – unsure of there is any enforcement. Casella encourages drivers to take route. DOT can gather information but no way to make route. Ms. Zotini: against garbage trucks coming through town with biking and running. Increased traffic equals increased wear on roads.

**Jody Blaney** – Despair in Bethlehem if proposed landfill goes through as proposed. Numbers are underestimated. West end of Main St from Adair to Bear Mountain Inn there are 26 businesses. Didn’t make contact with all businesses but sent reminder to businesses. Don’t know if the Interstate Commerce Committee can enforce or make change to traffic. Local businessman counting trucks now and the addition of more would be disastrous. Important to get input to selectmen. – 3 minute time limit – Bad idea for increased truck traffic.

**Chris McGrath** – how long will letter acceptance last? – Chairman Boisseau – no rush.

Chairman Boisseau - Thank all for coming out and providing input. Email admin@bethlehemnh.org

**Minutes – 12/13/2021**

**Selectman Morris made a motion to amend minutes as noted – Chairman Boisseau – seconded – roll call – all – Chairman Caplain abstain – motion passed**

**Other/Follow up from the board**

**Chairman Boisseau –** overpayment of $891.41 – 405-082.

**Chairman Caplain made a motion to refund $891.41 to 405-082 – Selectman Hibberd seconded – roll call - all – motion passed.**

**Selectman Hibberd** – first NHMA board meeting – sharing info – would like to invite Senator Erin Hennessey to a future meeting to discuss SB 249 restricting local oversite/ordinance/rules over short term rentals – Selectman Hibberd listed multiple bills the board should keep an eye on involving moderators delaying town meetings, electronic vote counting, town officials working elections, modify duties of appeal court, room and meals tax, 28 bills on vaccines, 3 bills on masks. Monies are available for public use from the GOFFER grant, infrastructure bill, ARPA funds. Modifying duties of appeal – SB

**Selectman Morris** – note from zoning contractor - incorporating STR into zoning is a path – licensure is also a path. Unclear on why it needs to be in zoning – Selectman Hibberd – enforcement – license will make it PD enforcement and not zoning enforcement – Selectman Morris would like to reach out to NHMA, is licensing wrong or are there 2 different ways to do it with zoning as well? May have to put off discussion until later after hearing NHMA advice.

**At 7:26pm Chairman Boisseau made a motion to go into non-public session per RSA 91A-3 II (personnel, legal) – Selectman Hibberd seconded – roll call – all – motion passed.**

**Selectman Hibberd mad a motion to rehire Sierra Miller for rec counselor – Chairman Boisseau – seconded – roll call - all – motion passed.**

**Selectman Hibberd –** discussed the transition into a new welfare director.

**Selectman Jensen made a motion to hire DF at $20,000/year stipend as a temporary welfare employee – Selectman Caplain seconded – roll call – all – motion passed.**

The board discussed filling the health officer position.

**Selectman Hibberd made a motion to hire VJ as the new health officer contingent on background check at $22/hr. – Chairman Boisseau seconded – roll call - all – motion passed.**

Board discussed new building inspector hiring process.

**Selectman Caplain made a motion to adjourn at 8:12pm – Selectman Jensen – seconded – roll call all – motion passed.**

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Fleury

Administrative Assistant