Bethlehem Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes

March 14, 2022

Newly elected board members were sworn in at 5:50pm followed by all other newly elected officials.

In person – Selectman Caplain, Selectman Jensen, Selectman Morris, Selectman Hibberd, and Selectman Queiroga

Chairman Caplain opened the meeting at 6:00pm and reminded zoom participants to keep their microphones on mute and in-person public members to use podium to speak.

**Board organization – Chair/Vice Chair – Liaisons**

**Selectman Hibberd made a motion to nominate Selectman Caplain as the board chair – Selectman Hibberd seconded – roll call – all – motion passed.**

**Chairman Caplain made a motion to nominate Selectman Hibberd as vice chair – Selectman Jensen seconded – roll call – all – motion passed.**

**Mask Rule in Town Hall –** Chairman Caplain – CDC updates to guidelines – would like to get board input before moving forward with meeting – Selectman Morris – CDC guidelines changed, and board should follow – Chairman Caplain – can still mandate if wanted – Selectman Morris – may open up to challenges if require mandate – recommend vs. mandate? Board discussed

**Chairman Caplain made a motion to make masks recommended but not mandated in town buildings – Selectman Hibberd seconded – roll call – all – motion passed.**

**Public Input:**

**Cheryl Jensen –** congratulate everyone on election and reelection – thanked board for time

**Mary Lou Krambeer –** thanked select board and town clerk for active participation in elections – Selectman Hibberd and Mary Jackson specifically.

**Pam Sullivan –** marketing update in April with new campaigns for Spring – mid April -

**Welcome new board members:**

**Chairman Caplain –** welcomed new select board member

**Liaisons –** board discussed new liaison positions

**Select Board support for Mascoma Bank:**

**Chairman Caplain -** Mascoma Bank closing branch in Bethlehem – asset to community having branch in town for local businesses – met with Mascoma rep last week – drafted letter for local town businesses to send to bank – looking for select board support – will circulate letter to board – need ATM in Bethlehem for cash businesses – Selectman Morris – would only leave Lancaster and Littleton branches.

**Selectman Morris made a motion to send letter to Mascoma Bank – Chairman Caplain seconded – roll call – all – motion passed.**

**Fire Station**

**Selectman Caplain –** topic has been addressed a few times – spoke with Jack Anderson to start process – suggests forming committee to start process before it’s too late – need to start planning for finances now – board discussed possible needs for new building and makeup of new committee – the board decided to start the committee with the department liaisons, police and fire chiefs, and 2 public members suggested by the chiefs. All meetings will be open to the public.

**ARPA Funds Hearing Logistics**

**Selectman Morris –** meeting for public input – more formal list on wish items prior to hearing – Selectman Queiroga – formal process – Chairman Caplain – compile list prior to meeting – Selectman Morris – will vet against final rule in effect April 1st

**Mike Bruno –** consultant hired to go over all ordinances – budget line went up – ARPA funds to offset info – send info to Tim about department use prior to going out to public so they know

**Nancy Strand –** total funds? – Chairman Caplain - roughly $270k – Nancy Strand – public needs information on total funds and how they can be used – Selectman Morris – summary is 47 pages long – public hearing noticed 2 weeks in advance and give plenty of time before next budget process.

**Minutes – 02/28/2022**

**Selectman Morris made a motion to accept minutes from 002/28/2022 - Selectman Jensen seconded – roll call all, less Selectman Queiroga (abstained) – motion passed.**

**Other**

**Selectman Jensen –** Alan Jackson – involved when boiler was redone with new plans – offered to take tour to explain changes.

**Selectman Hibberd –** goals for new year – agricultural commission – would like to get back to that – spoke with Meadow Stone and other farms – revisit in a month or so – working with Selectman Morris on employee benefits – policies that can be added to website to help inform public, help office staff – Update on front steps – redone years ago with new drainage – Tim Fleury contacted insurance company – recommended signs for steps – House bills: HB 1417 – reinstate 7.5% of employer contribution by state to NH retirement cost – recommended to die but moving to full house – HB 1033 – prohibits municipalities form using funds from taxes, state grants, etc. to lobby – The town is a NHMA member – lobbies on municipalities behalf – town would not be able to pay registration from tax funds – all NH municipalities are currently members of NHMA – HB 1122 – transfer station committee – authorizes municipalities to collect and resell demo debris at transfer station – Conservation Committee already supporting - HB 1064 – make town hand count ballots – recommended to kill bill – Selectman Hibberd – now is the time to add polies to bring to NHMA – currently board recommends/not recommends articles, no neutral option – Selectman Hibberd would like to submit policy change to allow neutral position.

**Selectman Queiroga** – looking at liaison list – need to be more involved with treasurer audit information – background in audit processes – get info from Tim Fleury to get more info in process – Chairman Caplain – unfunded liability on retirement plan currently not recorded – capital assets currently not listed as well – would like to see auditors present to board – Selectman Hibberd – auditors happy to do that – AQ – one valuation will get us on the right track as a starting point.

**Selectman Morris** – Conservation Commission – made list of permit FAQ – mostly DES – would like to add to website

**Chairman Caplain** – misinformation after election – setting record straight – golf course funds to lower tax rate: BCC was sold 2 years ago and went to unreserved fund – the funds used to lower tax rate were not specific to golf course sale – all unreserved funds came from unused tax funds – Solar not used in winter – engineers factored all in in design and savings projection – not based on perfect sunny day – funded 70% grants and donations – 30% from unreserved funds – no funds raised from additional taxes – savings of $675k over warranty period.

**Chairman Caplain** – Google news article – 10 most luxurious cabins in NH – PMR and fantastic write up on Bethlehem and PMR offerings – met with PMR and want to add to bike friendly initiative – want to bring in visitors all throughout year –

**Chairman Caplain** – future meeting dates – like to keep it every other week – 3/28, 4/11, 4/25 (school vacation), revisit after those 3 dates.

**At 7:14pm Chairman Caplain made a motion to go into non-public session per RSA 91A-3 II (personnel, legal) – Selectman Morris seconded – roll call - all – motion passed.**

**Board discussed legal issue with eviction.**

**Board discussed personnel and budgeted raises.**

**Selectman Hibberd made a motion to increase DB rate to $15.90/hr Selectman Morris seconded – roll call all – motion passed**

**Chairman Caplain made a motion to hire NK @ $16/hr for the rec program – Selectman Morris – roll call – all - motion passed.**

**Selectman Morris made a motion to adjourn @ 8:00pm – Selectman Hibberd seconded – roll call – all – motion passed.**

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Fleury

Administrative assistant