Bethlehem Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes

May 1st, 2023

In person –Chairman Morris, Select person Strand, Select person Hibberd, and Selectman Bruno.

Remote- Selectman Caplain

Chairman Morris opened the meeting at 6:00.

Building Permit- Chairman Morris introduced Bob Francis, Code Officer and Building inspector. Mr. Francis recommends increasing the Building Permit threshold from $3,000 to $6,000 given the increased material and construction costs.

**Select person Strand made a motion to increase the building permit threshold from $3,000 to $6,000. Chairman Morris seconded and all were in favor.**

Mr. Francis continued he would like to add permeant generators to the list requiring building permits because of the electrical work needed to complete the installation. The board agreed with Mr. Francis recommendation that permeant generators should require a building permit. Chris McGrath asked if the permit would require setbacks and how that would impact nonconforming lots and he thanked Mr. Francis for the work he had done for the town.

**Minutes 4/17- Select person Strand moved to accept the minutes with the two spelling corrections identified. Selectman Bruno seconded and the vote carried 3-2. Select person Hibberd and Selectman Caplain abstained.**

New Hampshire Energy Week -Selectman Caplain updated the board on New Hampshire Energy week and noted Bethlehem was nominated for an energy award for the solar array project.

EV Charging Station- Chairman Morris introduce David Van Houten from the Energy Commission to discuss a proposed contract with Revision Energy for the purpose of creating a plan for installing an EV charging station. Mr. Van Houten explained that installing an EV charging station requires a lot of research and expertise and the Energy Commission recommended working with Revision Energy to help execute a plan. Selectman Caplain continued that the Energy Commission had been contacting vendors **for the past 18 months** and they were not getting the information they were seeking. Selectman Caplain continued Revision Energy would help find the optimal location, estimate the cost of the project, and recommend grants that the town could seek to help pay the cost of installation. Select person Strand thanked the Energy Commission for all the work they do, however she did not agree with the exclusivity agreement. Chris McGrath stated he did not support using tax dollars for an EV charging station. It was decided to seek legal counsel on the contract.

Highway Department Estimates-Selectman Bruno updated the board on his meeting with Brett Jackson, Road Agent, at the highway department about the estimate for the new garage doors. Selectman Bruno explained the current doors are not up to current safety codes and he would recommend going forward with the estimate for 4 new garage doors for the highway department building to be paid out of general government buildings budget.

**Select person Hibberd made a motion to approve the purchase of four new garage doors for the highway building to be paid from general government buildings. Selectman Bruno seconded and all were in favor.**

Chairman Morris noted the single source estimate was a result of an existing relationship with the vendor.

**Selectman Hibberd made a motion to purchase the used guardrails. Chairman Morris seconded and all were in favor.**

**Facade Grant- Select person Strand made a motion to approve the façade grant for the Colonial Theater. Select person Hibberd seconded and all were in favor.**

**Contract for the new fire truck- Chairman Morris made a motion to accept the agreement for the purchase of the new fire truck. Selectman Bruno seconded and all were in favor.**

Trailer Donation- Chairman Morris explained that Bethlehem Emergency Services, a non-profit organization, donated a trailer to the Bethlehem Fire Department at an estimated value of $6,000 to use for forestry equipment.

**Chairman Morris made a motion to accept the trailer from Bethlehem Emergency Services. Select person Hibberd seconded and all were in favor.**

Avatar Assessing and Tax Software- Select person Hibberd informed the board that Mary Jackson, Tax Collector and Town Clerk would like to switch assessing and tax software to Avatar. Ms. Jackson has received several recommendations from other towns and it was recommended to convert during a reevaluation year which it currently is.

**Select person Hibberd made a motion to move forward with Avatar for assessing and tax software. Select person Strand seconded and all were in favor.**

**Select Board Goals** The board discussed the goals document that Select person Strand compiled as a starting point from the prior select board follow up list. Selectman Caplain had previously communicated that he wanted to continue the marketing initiative to support current businesses and attract new businesses to Bethlehem. Selectman Bruno suggested comparing the list with Master Plan that outlines goals for the select board. It was agreed to discuss it further during the meeting on May 15th.

**Other**- Chairman Morris updated the board that Jerry Blanchard had volunteered to be a Trustee of the Trust fund.

**Chairman Morris nominated Jerry Blanchard to the Trustees of the Trust fund. Select person Hibberd seconded and all were in favor.**

Select person Hibberd updated the board on her recent New Hampshire Municipal board meeting. Select person Hibberd also informed the board regarding the request to close on May 11th to organize before the shredding company comes in June.

**Chairman Morris made a motion to close the Select Board Office and Planning and Zoning Office on May 11th. Select person Hibberd seconded and all were in favor**.

Non-public Session per RSA 91A-3 II (personnel, reputation, and legal**) Chairperson Morris made a motion to go into non-public per RSA-91A-3 for reasons of reputation. Select person Strand seconded and roll call followed.**

**Chairman Morris made a motion to hire and rehire all the recommended rec applicants. Select person Strand seconded and all were in favor.**

**Chairman Morris made a motion to accept the agreement from CMCK for an increased monthly payment. Select person Strand seconded and all were in favor.**

**Chairman Morris made a motion to accept William Nugent to the fire department. Selectman Bruno Seconded and all were in favor.**

**Chairman Morris made a motion to hire Justin Francis for the highway department. Select person Hibberd seconded and all were in favor.**

Legal update.

**Chairman Morris made a motion to adjourn at 9:30. Select person Strand seconded and all were in favor.**

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Moritz

Town Administrator