Bethlehem Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes

June 26th, 2023

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

Minutes 6/12/2023 **Selectman Hibberd made a motion to accept the minutes from 6/12/2023. Selectman Strand seconded and all were in favor.**

Everyone Belongs sign- Selectman Strand opened discussion about the Everyone Belongs signs seeking approval from the board to add one in front of the town building. Selectman Bruno said he believed the sign had an agreeable message however he was concerned that the sign could be considered political, and he did not believe that was appropriate for town property. Selectman Hibberd said that the signs are inclusive of everyone, and she did not believe they were political. Chairman Morris stated Bethlehem has a long history of welcoming communities that have been intentionally excluded however she would like information on who is providing the signs. Rich Southwell, 219 Longfellow Dr, said he agrees that there could be an issue with certain residents because of the rainbow colors, and while the sign is a nice message that he agrees with, he doesn’t know if the town needs to put up signs because everyone should feel welcome when they come to Bethlehem. Chris Jensen stated that there wasn’t a political group behind the signs but a group of local people who thought it was a nice message to share. Selectman Hibberd made a motion to put the sign at the town building. Selectman Caplain seconded. Selectman Bruno stated his reservations that this could set a precedence for additional signs on public property. Selectman Strand asked the board to postpone any decisions for a future meeting and the motion was withdrawn.

New Mower for the Highway Dept to be purchased from the Highway Revolving Fund- **Selectman Strand made a motion to approve the new mower. Selectman Caplain seconded and all were in favor.**

Energy Commission RFI Selectman Caplain introduced the EV charging station request for information. Selectman Caplain explained that the Energy Commission had consulted the town of Lebanon and is confident the RFI will give the necessary information to the town. Mary Lou Krambeer, a member of the Energy Commission explained that the intent of commission is to stay on top of technology and gain insight on what can be implemented in Bethlehem. Selectman Caplain stated the intent is to gather the information to decide if having an EV charging station would be something the town should move forward with.

**Selectman Caplain made a motion to move forward with the proposed RFI. Selectman Strand seconded and all were in favor.**

Litter Ordinance Chairman Morris explained that original ordinance adopted in 2019 states a fine up to $1,000 and it has been requested to have more clarification. The board discussed a fee schedule of $150 for first offense $300 for second and up to $1,000 per violation.

**Chairman Morris made a motion to establish fines of $150 for first offense $300 for subsequent offenses up to $1,000 per violation and if it goes to court it can be requested to have the offender request to clean up. Selectman Caplain seconded.** Selectman Bruno suggested amending the motion to state if found guilty to the motion. **Chairman Morris amended the motion to establish fines of $150 for first offense $300 for subsequent offenses up to $1,000 per violation and additional penalties maybe assessed by the district court. Selectman Caplain seconded and all were in favor.**

Special Election- Chairman Morris updated the board on the possibility of needing a special election to re-adopt the veterans tax credit. *For future reference the special election was deemed unnecessary on June 27th however because of the timing it needed to be discussed in public before confirmation was received.*

Renewable Energy Credit Sale and Carbon Credit- Chairman Morris updated the board regarding the possibility of selling the renewable energy credits by working with an energy brokerage firm. Selectman Hibberd asked if it would be beneficial to have a shorter contract and would it limit the towns’ ability state Bethlehem generates renewable energy. Renewable energy credits will be further discussed at a future meeting.

Summerfest August 12th- **Chairman Morris made a motion to declare Summerfest a town event. Selectman Caplain seconded and all were in favor.**

The board asked for a schedule of the Summerfest events and to confirm coverage with Primex.

Alder Brook Road- Chairman Morris updated the board that DOT is requesting clarification from the town regarding the classification of Alder Brook Road. It was decided to continue discussion during the meeting on July 10th to communicate to the Polinski’s that it would be on the agenda.

Liaison/Committee Update- Selectman Bruno updated the board that he recently attended the Littleton Planning board meeting that was to discuss the proposed gravel pit off 116.

Conservation Commission- US Fish and Wildlife Service-Chairman Morris updated the board that there funding available from the wetland rehabilitation funds because of the Bretton Woods project and the Conservation Commission is seeking permission to apply for the funding. The conservation Committee identified several projects that could benefit from the money and applying for the grant does not financially obligate the town.

**Chairman Morris made a motion to allow the Conservation Commission to apply for funds from the Federal Fish and Wildlife Service as solicited. Selectman Hibberd seconded and all were in favor.**

 Chairman Morris updated the board that the Connecticut River Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA) is seeking a letter of support to apply for a grant enable to offer training on invasive species.

**Chairman Morris made a motion to submit a letter of support of an optional training on invasive species for employees and residents to the CISMA. Selectman Strand seconded and all were in favor.**

Rec Department Code of Conduct update- Selectman Strand recommended adding a sentence to the Rec department’s code of conduct stating a child will not be expelled from the rec program for the behavior of the adult.

**Selectman Hibberd made a motion to amend the Rec code of conduct to include a child will not be expelled from the rec program for the behavior of the adult. Selectman Bruno seconded and all were in favor.**

Selectman Strand also inquired if the board would be interested in investigating adding a dog park in Bethlehem. Selectman Bruno agreed that it was worth investigating.

Selectman Caplain updated the board on the Police Fire station visit in Twin and thanked both the Fire Chief and Chief of Police for their insight and time.

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

The board discussed deeded property 406-022.

Chairman Morris made a motion to adjourn at 9:45. Select person Strand seconded and all were in favor.

 Respectfully submitted,

Mary Moritz

Town Administrator