Bethlehem Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes

October 30th, 2023

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

Public Input- Chairman Morris opened the meeting by thanking Becky DiChristopher for her fundraising efforts for the Little Free Pantry and Food Pantry. Ms. DiChristopher informed the board that over $1,300 had been raised, and Melissa Sheehan and Dottie Champagne helped organize, and run the event. Ms. DiChristopher recommended giving the Bethlehem Food Pantry $300 and the remaining funds to the Little Free Pantry and the board agreed.

**Chairman Morris made a motion to accept the funds raised for the food pantries and allocate $300 to the Bethlehem Food Pantry and the remaining balance to the Little Free Pantry. Selectman Strand seconded and all were in favor.**

**Chairman Morris nominated Becky DiChristopher for a Bethlehem Bravo award for her efforts raising money for the Little Free Pantry and the Food Pantry. Selectman Strand seconded and all were in favor.**

Sullivan Creative Marketing update- Chairman Morris introduced Pam Sullivan and Joanne Brunk from Sullivan Creative to give an update on the marketing plan. Pam Sullivan explained the goals of the marketing plan have been to create a uniform brand for the town, drive economic growth by supporting businesses, and engage residents by promoting what makes Bethlehem unique. Joanne Brunk shared the previous initiatives of the marketing plan from 2021, 2022, and 2023 and current website analytics. Selectman Bruno asked each visit to the website counted as an impression or only new visitors counted and Ms. Sullivan explained only new addresses were counted. Ms. Sullivan said moving forward for 2024 the marketing plan will include the 250th anniversary. Chairman Morris thanked Sullivan Creative for the update.

Crystal Gilman- Rec Basketball- Chairman Morris introduced Crystal Gilman who wanted to discuss the Rec Basketball program with the board. Ms. Gilman explained that she did not agree with limiting the number of participants for rec sports. Jason Moody stated he agreed with Ms. Gilman’s statement and asked how many children partcipate in the rec program. Teresa Wood suggested the select board consider the overall mission of the rec department and noted no other Rec Director had limited the number of participants for the athletic teams. Michelle Arsenal was displeased with the sign-up process for the sports teams because the teams fill so quickly if you are not available when it takes place your child cannot participate. Ms. Arsenal also noted she was concerned that the coaches were not receiving the children’s medical information. Lisa Mancini said she had three kids in the rec program, and she was wondering what the $30 sign up fee was being used for. Mike Culver explained there are a lot of expenses of each individual sport season, and he recommended the board consider investing more in the rec department. Brittney Emmens explained she is coaching a sport she knows nothing about because there were not enough coaches. She explained people often say they will volunteer but when the time comes, they don’t sign up. Cindy Baker said she finds the communication inconsistent between the school DOJO and regular email. Chris Jensen suggested parents visit his Facebook page Our Town because he shares all the Rec’s Facebook posts. Selectman Bruno continued that there had been a lot of good suggestions from the parents and that it might be helpful to form a group of parents, the Rec Director, and the Liaison to continue working together. Abbie Sawyer, Rec Director, responded to the communication inquiry stating she sends notices to parents in DOJO and email. Ms. Sawyer continued that it is not her intent to eliminate kids from participating in sports however she is trying to work best with the space and time limitations. She continued that the prior rec director also had size limitations however there were less kids registering. Selectman Strand thanked the parents for participating in a productive conversation. Jason Moody thanked the board for listening to the concerns of the parents and asked if there was a scholarship available for children who could not afford rec. Chris Jensen informed the board of the Needy Child Fund that was established a long time ago. Chairman Morris thanked everyone who had participated. Selectman Hibberd questioned the board on the process of waiting until all comments were made before allowing the department head the opportunity to explain.

Minutes 10/2 and 10/16 **Chairman Morris made a motion to approve the minutes from 10/2. Selectman Strand seconded and all were in favor. Selectman Bruno abstained.**

Selectman Strand recommended adding commentary to the ARPA discussion.

**Chairman Morris made a motion to approve the 10/16 minutes as amended. Selectman Strand seconded and all were in favor. Selectman Caplain abstained.**

Meeting Schedule- The board discussed adding a meeting 11/6 and checking schedules for the three-week period between 12/18 and 1/8/2024 in case a meeting is necessary.

Sign Permit Super Secret- Selectman Bruno recommended that the sign for Super Secret be moved further away from 302.

**Selectman Strand made a motion to approve the sign permit for Super Secret Ice Cream. Selectman Hibberd seconded and all were in favor.**

Letter from BOS to property owners regarding tax exemption- **Chairman Morris motioned to send a letter to the two property owners regarding the tax exemption. Selectman Hibberd seconded and all were in favor.**

Sign Ordinance Selectman Bruno would like to form a working group to investigate the sign ordinance in order to have it ready for a 2024 warrant. Chairman Morris offered to help as she has already started looking into what other towns have.

Insurance Increase- postponed until 11/6 meeting.

Liaison/Committee Update Selectman Strand updated the board that Margret Gale was leaving the Transfer Station Committee.

**Selectman Strand motioned to remove Margret Gale from the Transfer Station Committee. Selectman Hibberd seconded and all were in favor.**

Selectman Strand updated the board that the Transfer Station Committee would like to meet with New Hampshire Congressional local reps to ask questions about funding opportunities.

**Chairman Morris made a motion to have the Transfer Station Committee send letters to the congressional reps requesting meetings. Selectman Hibberd seconded and all were in favor.**

Chairman Morris updated the board that Chris Jensen agreed to be an alternate on the Conservation Committee.

**Chairman Morris made a motion to appoint Chris Jensen an alternate on the Conservation Commission. Selectman Bruno seconded and all were in favor.**

Selectman Bruno met with Doug Harmon, Library Trustee regarding the sidewalk study and he submitted the application to add a historical marker.

Other – Selectman Bruno informed the board that the Planning board has been working with Tara Bamford drafting the proposed ordinance changes from the NHHOP grant. Selectman Bruno continued that 11/29 would be an informational meeting and 12/13 is the first public hearing on the changes.

It was requested to extend the deadline to submit a response to the RFP for the Visitors Center.

**Selectman Strand made a motion to extend the RFP deadline to 12/1. Selectman Hibberd seconded and all were in favor.**

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

The board discussed personnel.

Chairman Morris made a motion to adjourn at 9:30. Selectman Strand seconded, and all were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Moritz

Town Administrator