Bethlehem Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes

November 27th, 2023

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

Budget: Library, Town Clerk/Tax Collector, Tan, Legal, Planning/Zoning, Welfare, GGB- Chairman Morris explained Planning/Zoning and Direct assistance would be the following week and introduced Len Grubs, Library Trustee and Treasurer to discuss the 2024 Library budget. Mr. Grubbs explained the increase to the budget was primarily due to inflation and personnel. The library is planning to repair or replace the exterior doors of the community room. Selectman Strand asked why they still budgeted for electricity and Doug Harmon, President of the Library Board explained we do not have a full year history so it still needs to be budgeted for.

**Tax Collector/Town Clerk**- Mary Jackson explained the increase to the Town Clerks budget is a result of 4 elections in 2024. Ms. Jackson is looking for a deputy Town Clerk and Tax Collector and hoping to have someone trained by March Town meeting. Ms. Jackson continued that the current ballot counter will be obsolete, however she is not ready to recommend a new machine. Selectman Strand asked why the increase to the supplies line item and Ms. Jackson explained there is still an outstanding expense for the fourth E-Poll pad and with the 4 elections next year additional supplies will be needed. Tax Collector budget has a slight increase based on pay increases. Ms. Jackson asked the board to consider increasing the longevity bonus to 5% of her salary because the town does not pay into NH retirement for Town Clerk/Tax Collector position. **TAN**- the board agreed with recommendation of keeping TAN budget at $20,000 per the Treasurer’s recommendation. **Legal**- the board agreed to the increase to the legal budget from $20,000 to $30,000. Chairman Morris requested breaking out the legal budget to start differentiating code enforcement from other legal expenses. Government Buildings- the change to the GGB budget is a result of reducing the maintenance line item to increase the capital reserve.

FEMA Flood Maps- Chairman Morris explained as part of the process of moving forward with FEMA flood plan is the Select Board must adopt a resolution and this will allow residents to get flood insurance. Selectman Bruno suggested waiting on voting until the board was able to review the changes because when the Planning Board put forth the ordinance at 2023 town meeting it was stated that there was no change to the flood plan. The board agreed.

Minutes 11/13 and 11/20 **Chairman Morris motioned to approve the 11/13 minutes as amended. Selectman Strand seconded and all in favor.**

**Chairman Morris motioned to approve the 11/20 minutes from 11/20. Selectman Strand seconded and all were in favor.**

RFP Assessing Company- The board discussed the proposed RFP for assessing and recommended amending the dates to reflect the five-year time of 2024 through 2029 to include the total town reevaluation and reducing the from 5 sealed copies to one.

**Selectman Strand motioned to approve the RFP for 5-year assessment services as stated. Selectman Bruno seconded and all were in favor.**

Ammonoosuc LAC -Chairman Morris explained the importance of having Bethlehem ALAC representation. Selectman Bruno said the volunteer should be a Bethlehem resident and the board agreed.

Community Power hearings- Chairman Morris noted the two public hearings for the Bethlehem Energy Aggregation Committee to discuss the draft of the Bethlehem Energy Aggregation Plan would be held on December 7th and 14th at the Profile School Library.

Liaison/Committee Update Selectman Strand updated the board that basketball registration is closed, and the coaches meeting has taken place. Selectman Strand continued that the teams were formed using randomized software.

Chairman Morris updated the board that the Conservation Committee met recently to review permits and applications because comments are due November 28th. The Conservation is also meeting with Eversource to discuss the pole project.

Selectman Bruno updated the board that the Historical Society would be lighting the Veterans Memorial Christmas tree on December 9th. He continued the fire department had participated in the Littleton parade the prior weekend and Christmas in Bethlehem would be taking place on December 2nd which would include events at the library.

Other Selectman Strand congratulated Meadowstone Farms for their recent Best Business award from the Littleton Chamber of Commerce.

Chairman Morris explained WREN had requested a letter of support for the NH Liquor Commission to sell wine which they had previously done.

**Chairman Morris motioned to send a letter of support to NH Liquor commission in support of WREN selling wine. Selectman Strand seconded and all were in favor.**

**Chairman Morris motioned to expend $9,120.30 from GGB building maintenance budget instead of the Building Maintenance capital reserve. Selectman Strand 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 personnel. Selectman Strand seconded and roll call followed.

The board discussed personnel.

Chairman Morris made a motion to adjourn at 8:30. Selectman Strand seconded, and all were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Moritz

Town Administrator