Bethlehem Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes

December 11th, 2023

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

Public Input- No public input

Budget: Cemetery, Police, Rec, Highway, Fire/Ambulance, Dispatch, Street Lights, Executive

Cemetery- Clare Brown presented the cemetery budget noting the increase to the budget pertained to cemetery maintenance.

Highway- Brett Jackson, Bethlehem Road Agent, introduced highway budget explaining the 5% increase was based on increases in supply costs and personnel. Mr. Jackson explained specific costs in the supplies line item.

Police- Alan DeMoranville, Police Chief, explained the police budget noting the increase to the budget was pay increases to retain officers.

Fire/Ambulance- Jack Anderson, Fire Chief, went over the Fire department budget noting the reduction was based on his position moving to part time. The ambulance budget had an increase because Chief Anderson is recommending adding a $50.00 daily stipend to the ambulance crew to ensure availability between 6:00am and 6:00pm. Selectman Hibberd asked how many calls had been rejected during those hours and if the stipend was necessary. Chief Anderson believes the stipend is warranted to retain ambulance personnel and recruit potential new staff. He continued Whitefield already has a stipend for ambulance personnel. The dispatch budget had a slight increase. Chairman Morris recommended looking into absorbing the 911 marker cost into the building permit fee.

Rec- Abbie Sawyer, Rec Director, explained the rec budget increases were based on pay increases to the counselors and property maintenance projects. The board discussed moving the tennis court resurfacing to the rec revolving fund and trying to reduce the percent increase.

Streetlights- The board discussed reducing the streetlight budget and requested additional information on how the solar could offset the expense.

Executive- The marketing expense moved from Vistors Center to Executive and the board requested more information from Sullivan creative on a way to reduce the marketing budget. Chris MacGrath asked the board to consider who benefits from the marketing initiative. Rich Southwell asked the board what the marketing plan hoped to accomplish. Chris Jensen noted the marketing plan was intended to drive economic development in Bethlehem and marketing is difficult to measure.

Draft Warrant list – The board discussed the draft warrant list which included increasing the elderly exemption, adding a disability exemption, adding a warrant for the 250th celebration, increasing the Conservation Commissions % of land use tax, visitors center roof warrant, fire truck warrant for the balance to be paid from the general fund, and readopting the veterans tax credit.

**Chairman Morris motioned to add a disability exemption warrant. Selectman Hibberd seconded and all were in favor.**

Minutes 12/4- **Chairman Morris motions to accept minutes as amended. Selectman Strand seconded and all were in favor.**

Purchase request banner 250th **Selectman Caplain motioned to approve the banner purchase. Selectman Strand seconded and all were in favor.**

Liaison/Committee Update

Other Chairman Morris explained an abatement put forth by KRT assessing.

**Selectman Hibberd motioned to approve the abatement for Map 205 lot 021 in the amount of $14,804.16. Selectman Caplain 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 reputation. Selectman Strand seconded and roll call followed.

**Selectman Hibberd to approve the expense to be paid out of the Needy Child Trust and pay directly to the dentist. Selectman Caplain seconded and all were in favor.**

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

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Moritz

Town Administrator