Bethlehem Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes

December 18th, 2023

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

Public Hearing: Food Pantry Unanticipated Revenue Chairman Morris opened the public hearing at 6:00 to accept the unanticipated funds for the food pantry.

Chairman Morris motioned to accept the $15,000 to make repairs and upgrades to the food pantry. Selectman Caplain seconded and all were in favor.

Chairman Morris motioned to close the public hearing at 6:04. Selectman Caplain seconded and all were in favor.

Sullivan Creative- Chairman Morris introduced Pam Sullivan, Sullivan Creative, to discuss the marketing budget. Ms. Sullivan explained the marketing plan was developed in 2020 as an economic development driver for Bethlehem businesses. Selectman Caplain explained that he has worked closely with Sullivan Creative over the last three years and feels the amount requested is reasonable. Chris Jensen stated before the marketing plan was initiated Bethlehem had a reputation as not being “business friendly” and he hoped the town would continue investing in marketing. Rich Southwell asked the board to consider at what point the Bethlehem businesses should be responsible for driving the economic development of the marketing plan. Selectman Strand noted the marketing plan promotes Bethlehem businesses and the area and Ms. Sullivan explained the region benefits from larger area attractions.

Total Budget Overview- Chairman Morris went over the total budget increase from 2023 to 2024. Selectman Hibberd requested additional information on the ambulance stipend and how it should be implemented. Selectman Caplain agreed noting he was not comfortable with the $40,000 increase to the ambulance budget. Selectman Strand anticipated potential changes to the stipend that would be discussed. Chairman Morris stated she believes the stipend would improve the department’s ability to maintain personnel and retain mutual aide partnerships with other towns. Chairman Morris continued that the additional cost could be offset by increased revenue from the ambulance. Selectman Bruno commented on how Chief Anderson has proactively recruited EMT personnel. Selectman Caplain would like to add money to the budget for the Traffic Calming task force to react to recommendations. Selectman Caplain also would like to see the rec budget reduced to the 2023 budget amount.

**Selectman Caplain motioned to reduce the rec budget to 2023 amount. Selectman Bruno seconded. Selectman Hibberd explained she had a lot of questions regarding the rec budget, received answers, and supports the rec budget as is. The vote was denied 1-4.**

It was recommended that the rec director reduce the pay increase.

FEMA Flood Plan Resolution- **Chairman Morris motioned Pursuant to RSA 674:57, by resolution of the Board of Selectmen, all lands designated as special flood hazard areas by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in its "Flood Insurance Study for the County of Grafton, NH" dated February 8, 2024, together with the associated Flood Insurance Rate Maps Panels 33009C0330F, 33009C0340F, and 33009C0345F dated February 8, 2024 and 33009C0117E, 33009C0120E, 33009C0128E, 33009C0130E, 33009C0135E, 33009C0136E, 33009C0140E, 33009C0145E, 33009C0155E, 33009C0165E,33009C0170E, 33009C0190E, 33009C0280E, 33009C0285E, 33009C0305E, 33009C0310E, and33009C0335E dated February 20, 2008, are declared to be part of the Town of Bethlehem Zoning Ordinance and are hereby incorporated by reference. Selectman Bruno seconded the motion, and all were in favor.**

Assessing RFP- Chairman Morris opened the response the assessing RFP from Commerford, Nieder, & Perkins, LLC. The board decided to discuss it at a future meeting.

Minutes 12/11- **Chairman Morris motioned to accept the minutes from 12/11. Selectman Hibberd seconded and all were in favor.**

FEMA Bric Grant-Maplewood Hill Road Chairman Morris explained that Bethlehem was awarded a Hazardous Mitigation scoping grant from FEMA.

**Chairman Morris motioned to accept the terms of the** **Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC)as presented in the amount of $165,000.00 for completing a project scoping project under BRIC 22 to conduct the necessary engineering and prep work for a future mitigation project on Maplewood Hill Road. Furthermore, the Board acknowledges that the total cost of this project will be $165,000.00, in which the town will be responsible for a 25% match ($41,250.00). Selectman Hibberd seconded and the vote carried 4-0. Selectman Caplain abstained.**

**Chairman Morris motioned to authorize Mary Moritz, Town Administrator, signing authority on behalf of the town for the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant. Selectman Strand seconded and all were in favor.**

2023 Budget Encumbrance **Selectman Hibberd motioned to encumber $18,000 for the pool paint, $15,000 for asphalt, and $8,000 for banners and hardware for a total of $41,000. Selectman Bruno seconded and all were in favor.**

Liaison/Committee Update Selectman Strand updated the board that the Transfer Station Committee submitted the USDA grant.

Selectman Bruno suggested working with the resident who had mentioned submitting a petition warrant article for the All-Veteran’s tax credit.

**Chairman Morris motioned the select board submit an All-Veteran’s tax credit for 2024 town meeting. Selectman Hibberd seconded and all were in favor.**

Selectman Caplain noted his concern about the impact of the All-Veteran’s tax credit warrant on the existing readoption of the Veteran’s Tax credit but acknowledged the benefit of the warrant coming from the select board.

Other

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 both the expenses to be paid out of the Needy Child Trust. Chairman Morris seconded and all were in favor.**

Chairman Morris made a motion to adjourn at 7:50. Selectman Strand seconded, and all were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Moritz

Town Administrator