Bethlehem Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes

January 8th, 2023

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

Public Input Chris McGrath asked the board if they had information on the visitor’s center roof. Chairman Morris explained they would be discussing the warrants during the meeting.

Budget Hearing Chairman Morris opened the Budget hearing at 6:02. The board went over the budget total explaining that the increase was driven by insurance and personnel. Selectman Hibberd asked about more information regarding the Ambulance stipend. Chris McGrath inquired about going over each department by line item and Selectman Strand noted this was the third time the board had discussed the budget. Selectman Bruno recommended if there was a particular department Mr. McGrath wanted information on the board would be willing to open discussion. Mr. McGrath asked why the legal budget had increased $10,000 and Chairman Morris explained legal expenses was over budget in 2023 because of taking properties to court for noncompliance. Chairman Morris explained the warrants went over 2024 town meeting. Chief Anderson explained that he was working on a draft policy for the ambulance stipend to address the questions from the board.

DOT GIS Road Classification Chairman Morris open discussion on DOT road classification. The DOT GIS map has 5 Bethlehem roads classified as class VI that the town has as private. Chairman Morris explained that the town sought legal advice and the attorney explained that it would be costly to further investigate. Mary Polanski addressed the board regarding Alder Brook Drive explaining her history with the gravel pit that abuts her land. Chairman Morris explained that only 600 ft of Alder Brook is in Bethlehem and Littleton was able to find the warrant that was passed in 1955 changing Alder Brook from a town road to private which supports Bethlehem’s position that it is a private road not class 6.

**Chairman Morris motioned to submit the road classification form to DOT and remove Sawmill from the list. Selectman Bruno seconded and all were in favor.**

Traffic Calming Committee Selectman Caplain would like to form a Traffic Calming committee based on the North Country Counsel’s recommendations. He would the committee to comprise of 5 or 6 members including 1 or two members from the public. Selectman Hibberd suggested creating job descriptions and setting expectations including deadlines. Chairman Morris suggested not including the sidewalk from the elementary school to the town building with the Traffic Calming Committee.

**Selectman Caplain motioned to create a short-term Traffic Calming Task force. Selectman Strand seconded. Selectman Bruno would like further discussion. Selectman Caplain withdrew his motion.**

Auditors Management Letter Selectman Caplain would like the employees who provide information to the auditors to sign a document similar to the management letter. It was discussed that the board would be notified when the auditors come in the spring and end of October.

Assessing RFP The board reviewed the assessing companies proposals and decided to move forward with submitting a contract review with DRA because it did not obligate the town and they could continue discussion at the next meeting.

**Chairman Morris motioned to submit the Commerford, Nieder, & Perkins contract to DRA for review. Selectman Caplain seconded and all were in favor.**

Minutes 12/18 **Selectman Caplain made a motion to approve the minutes from December 18th. Selectman Strand seconded and all were in favor.**

Liaison/Committee Update Chairman Morris asked the board to sign a letter in support of the installation of a sidewalk from the elementary school to the Library.

**Chairman Morris motioned to send a letter of support of the installation of a sidewalk from the elementary school to the library. Selectman Bruno seconded and all were in favor.**

Other **Chairman Morris motioned to approve the abatement for the over payment of map 413. Selectman Hibberd seconded and all were in favor.**

**Selectman Hibberd motioned to sign the annual agreement for the GIS map software. Selectman Bruno 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.

**Chairman Morris motioned to change the language to reflect at 15 years of service the longevity bonus would either pay $1000 or add an additional week of PTO. Selectman Hibberd seconded and all were in favor.**

**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