Bethlehem Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes

April 15th, 2024

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

Public Input- There was no public input.

STR application- Chairman Bruno opened discussion on short term rental application process noting this was the start of process. Chairman Bruno continued that he had received an email from Tara Bamford, Planning Board consultant explaining STR are just adopted as permittable use so there wouldn’t be a property to grandfather and STR would be regulated under RSA 41:11. Don Hilliard, Hilliard Properties, stated he had been involved in other towns who had adopted STR ordinances and asked if Bethlehem’s ordinance included long term rentals. Chairman Bruno responded that the ordinance included only STR. Selectman Strand suggested creating a short-term committee to research STR permit process and application. Barry Zitzer asked if someone donated their property for a fund raiser would that constitute a STR property. Martie Cook responded Tara Bamford provided a list of properties that would be included. The board decided to continue STR application when the full board was present.

Abatement update- Chairman Bruno updated the board that the assessors had received 30 abatements. The deadline for the town to notify the applicant is July 1st and the deadline to submit an appeal to the BTLA is September 1st. Chris McGrath asked how many abatements we receive in a typical year, and it was estimated 19 abatements in 2018 the last reevaluation.

Tri County Transit- Chairman Bruno asked Mary Moritz to update the board on Tri County Transit. Mary Moritz stated she met with Tala Silver from Tri Country Transit regarding the possibility of adding Bethlehem to the Tri Town Bus route. Mr. Silver stated to add Bethlehem to an existing bus route would take at least 8 months to complete a study. Mr. Silver recommended encouraging residents to volunteer through Tri County Transit and to use the door-to-door service that is already being offered.

Update Special Meeting- Chairman Bruno stated that the board had voted on April 1st to petition Grafton County Superior Court to request a special meeting to make a land acquisition for the future Public Safety facility. Chairman Bruno continued a purchase and sale agreement was not agreed upon so there will be no need to have a special meeting. Rich Southwell suggested prioritizing capital projects. Chris McGrath stated he believed the Public Safety building should be located where the playground is and relocate the playground.

Minutes 4/1/2024- Postponed until 4/15 meeting.

Updates and other business- Chairman Bruno explained on February 12th the board voted to purchase the new Highway Department truck out of the capital reserve however the Treasurer recommended it come from the revolving fund.

**Chairman Bruno motioned to purchase the new truck from the Highway revolving Fund not the capital reserve. Selectman Hibberd seconded and all were in favor.**

Chairman Bruno recommended the board reinstate the Capital Improvement Committee that had been adopted at town meeting in 2018. The board would decide which board member would be on the committee at the next meeting.

**Chairman Bruno motioned to reinstate the previously adopted Capital Improvement Committee. Selectman Strand seconded and all were in favor.**

Selectman Strand updated the board that she had been investigating grant opportunities for the sidewalk project. Chairman Bruno stated he believed the project could be funded with the Safe Routes to School grant.

Chairman Bruno thanks Chief Anderson and the Fire department for their efforts to maintain traffic after the eclipse that took place on April 8th.

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

The board discussed a personnel issue.

Chairman Bruno made a motioned to adjourn at 7:30. Selectman Strand seconded, and all were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Moritz

Town Administrator