Bethlehem Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes

August 5th, 2024

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

Public Input-

Rec Program Rates- Select Woman Strand read the following statement:

*The public information meeting on July 22nd was well attended, both in person and via Zoom. Knowing how difficult it can be for parents with young children to attend a weeknight meeting, this was a testament to how important the afterschool Rec program is to our families. We thank all those who participated and also thank the representatives from the Boys and Girls Club who introduced their services and answered questions.*

*Anyone that was there, in person or via Zoom, or those who watched the recording after the fact, would say the same thing: moving the location of our afterschool program to away from BES, especially as far as the Boys and Girls Club in Lisbon, was a non-starter. Of course, for parents and families who find that location more convenient for them – whether because of where they work, or the close proximity to Evergreen’s programs, or the financial aid offered and lower program cost – they are still welcome to register with the Boys and Girls Club, just like previous years.*

*The parents who completed the surveys reiterated the same concerns about moving away from the BES location. We also thank all those who took the time to submit the surveys.*

*There were a few other points raised that we believe emphasized what a loss it would be to move the program away from BES and Bethlehem in general. Programs at both the library and The Colonial would also be impacted by a move – two valuable resources in our community. In addition, for children who play soccer, basketball and baseball with the Rec Dept, getting to practices would be much more difficult for families.*

*The Select Board listened and agrees that the afterschool program should stay here. Having said that, we will still be looking at ways to lessen the tax burden of this program for our residents. When the afterschool program was first initiated in 2003, it was hoped to be a self-sufficient program. This past year, parents paid $150/month for a child in the full time after school program, meaning 5 days per week. This rate applies for the 5 months that there are no vacation weeks; it’s less when there are vacation breaks. If the program were to be fully self- funded, using the 21 full time students and 7 part time students who attended this past year, that cost would have jumped to just over $342 a month, over a 100% increase. That is obviously not feasible.*

*However, we believe there must be some increase in the program cost that reflects the value of having the program here in town and through our Rec Dept. In addition, we’d like to increase revenues from the program by opening up enrollment to take more students, instead of having the 25-student cap we have now. But with registration coming up later this week, our agenda tonight includes a discussion on program rates. We do welcome public comment, but we’ll begin with a discussion from board members first.*

The select board discussed, and moved forward with, the recommended increase from $150 to $200 for full time after school rec program and $85 to $110 for part time which represents a 33% increase.

**Selectman Caplain motioned to accept the rates as proposed. Select Woman Strand seconded, and all were in favor.**

Bike the North Country- Selectman Caplain, representing Bike the North Country, is seeking approval to add trail information Kiosks at the Elm Street trail location and by the basketball court. Chairman Bruno noted he liked the picture of the kiosk and would be in support of adding after consulting with the Road Agent.

**Selectman Morris motioned to approve the two bike kiosks at the Elm Street location and the basketball courts. Select Woman Hibberd seconded, and all were in favor. Selectman Caplain abstained**.

Hazardous Waste Mutual Aid- **Selectman Caplain motioned to join the Hazardous Waste Mutual Aid. Select Woman Hibberd seconded. and all were in favor.**

Updates and other business- Selectman Caplain updated the board that he would be meeting with DOT the following week to go over the Traffic Calming recommendations.

Non-public Session per RSA 91A-3 II (personnel, reputation, and legal) Select Woman Strand motioned to go into nonpublic per RSA 91A-3 II for reasons of personnel and legal. Selectman Morris seconded and roll call followed.

The board discussed a personnel and legal issue.

Selectman Morris motioned to enter into the agreement with Gabe Johnson. Selectman Caplain seconded and all were in favor.

Select Woman Strand made a motion to adjourn at 7:30. Selectman Morris seconded, and all were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Moritz

Town Administrator