Bethlehem Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes

November 18th, 2024

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

Brett Jackson- Backhoe Purchase- Chairman Bruno introduced Brett Jackson, Road Agent, to discuss the purchase of a Caterpillar 420 Backhoe. Mr. Jackson explained that he received a quote for a new backhoe to $99,900 for a 6-year 5.4% interest rate annual payment of $20,072. Mr. Jackson continued our current backhoe is not scheduled to be replaced until 2030, however it has required costly maintenance, and the new backhoe has additional features and would be under warranty for 7 years. Rich Southwell, CIP Committee member, spoke in favor of the purchase on behalf of the CIP committee.

**Selectman Morris motioned to purchase the Caterpillar 420 Backhoe at $99,900 6-year in the rears 5.4 interest rate funded from the Highway revolving fund. Select Woman Hibberd seconded, and all were in favor.**

Select Woman Strand updated the board that the TSC started working with the consultant and mentioned that he recommended looking into curbside pickup for the village. Select Woman Strand noted curbside pick up would reduce the traffic flow at the transfer station and could reduce personnel costs.

6:00 start Public Hearing: Turtle Ridge Foundation and Spirit of Blue Foundation- Chairman Bruno opened the public hearing at 6:00 and read the notice:

 *The Board of Selectmen will hold a public hearing Monday, November 18, 2024, at 6:00pm, during the regularly scheduled Select Board meeting in the Town Building Meeting Room, 2155 Main St., Bethlehem, NH to accept unanticipated funds from the Turtle Ridge Foundation and the Spirit of Blue Foundation. The Turtle Ridge Foundation raised $15,000 to be added to the Bethlehem Skate Park fund in honor of Brendan Foley. The Spirit of Blue Foundation awarded the Bethlehem Police Department a grant in the amount $10,651.61 to purchase safety equipment.*

Chairman Bruno introduced Kyla Miller, Turtle Ridge Foundation, and Nick Storella, Bethlehem Skate Park Committee to receive $15,000 donation to the skate park. Kyla Miller explained the foundation raised the donation during Bode Bash in memory of Brendan Foley. In addition to the skate park, Turtle Ridge also donated $15,000 to Copper Cannon Camp.

**Select Woman Strand motioned to accept the $15,000 for the skate park from Turtle Ridge Foundation. Selectman Morris seconded, and all were in favor.**

Chairman Bruno continued Chief Dube had contacted The Spirit of Blue Foundation requesting assistance to purchase Police safety equipment in the amount of $10,651.61.

**Chairman Bruno motioned to accept the grant from The Spirit of Blue of Blue Foundation in the amount of $10,651.61. Select Woman Hibberd seconded, and all were in favor.**

Public Input- Chris McGrath noted there previously was a recycling bin for the meeting room. Mary Moritz explained recycling has to be rinsed. Mr. McGrath also recommended getting a maintenance person for the town building noting the front steps require fixing.

Budget Overview-Library, Building Inspection, Legal, Insurance, Visitors Center, Wood Assessor, Street Lights, Health, TAN Debit Services

Library- Chairman Bruno introduced Len Grubbs, Library Treasurer, to go over the library budget. Mr. Grubbs explained the library would be requesting the same amount from tax payers as last year $190,500 and the Friends of the Library would be donating the increase to the budget. Mr. Grubbs continued the electricity line item has increased and there is a question regarding the solar offset. The board discussed having the Energy Commission attend a future meeting to explain.

Building Inspection- Bob Francis, Building Inspector and Code Officer presented his 2025 budget with a three percent increase.

Legal Budget- The board questioned if the legal budget could be reduced further.

Insurance- The board discussed the insurance increase which is a result of having three open full-time positions and having to budget at the highest rate.

Visitors Center, Wood Assessor, and Street Lights- The board discussed Visitors Center, Wood Assessor, and Street Lights which had minimal increases.

Health- The board discussed the Health Officer budget and questioned why the supply line item stayed at $500 when no funds were allocated. Chairman Bruno and Selectman Caplain felt it should be reduced. Select Woman Hibberd disagreed stating next year the funds could be needed.

TAN Debit Services- The board is considering reducing the TAN budget line item that currently has $20,000 in the budget.

Updates and other business- Select Woman Hibberd requested the flags in front of the town building be replaced.

Non-public Session per RSA 91A-3 II (personnel, reputation, and legal) Chairman Bruno 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 issue and legal.

Chairman Bruno made a motion to adjourn at 8:30. Selectman Strand seconded, and all were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Moritz

Town Administrator