

Bethlehem Board of Selectmen
Meeting Minutes
Bethlehem Selectmen Office
January 11, 2016

Present: Chairman Culver, Selectman Blanchard, Selectman Laleme, Selectman Glavac, Selectman Staples.

Chairman Culver opened the meeting at 6:02pm.

Northern Pass: Peter Grote from Franconia came before the Board to discuss the Northern Pass and said he is on an advisory committee along with Eric Meth, Ginny Jeffries, and Mary Grote. He said they would like a coalition of towns to streamline the concerns and share cost of attorneys. He said towns should apply for intervener status individually but join together after to streamline the issues to make a bigger impact. He suggested doing a warrant article to cover expense of attorney's. Selectman Glavac asked what the estimate cost for the attorney's is and was told 100 to 200 thousand for the estimated 3 years it will go on for. He recommended we do the warrant article for \$10,000.00 and ask for private donations. Mr. Grote said citizens can also apply for intervener and suggested individuals support their Boards. Mr. Grote said the attorney's will review the intervener letter if we wanted that. Chris Jensen said if each town is putting together the same list they (Northern Pass) will just clump us together. Mr. Grote said that is why the attorney's are doing it and said we will not lose our ability to customize it. Dick Robie asked about the towns up north and if they would be included in this. He was told they will be. Mr. Grote said they will be fighting to have the line buried from the Canadian border to Franklin and said they should bury it along Interstate 93. Mr. Jensen said the Northern Pass has said they will not bury the entire line and is skeptic on how we can force them to bury it. Mr. Grote said their net profit was 2 billion and said they can afford to bury it and still make a profit. Selectman Glavac asked when we join and Mr. Grote said before the Feb. 5th deadline but the majority of the work will be done after the intervener process. Mrs. Jensen said there will be a risk of them lumping us together anyways even if we all did it individually.

The Board discussed the draft Intervener letter that Mrs. Jensen drafted. Chairman Culver said the letter should not state information as fact if they are not facts. Selectman Staples said it is important to get all concerns in the letter. Chairman Culver said the Baker Brook project is a fact but we could say we are concerned with the impact to tourism but not state tourism will definitely be impacted because it isn't factual. Selectman Glavac said the information about destroying existing businesses is not factual, we know the potential for it is there but not factual. Selectman Blanchard agreed with it needing to be factual and was concerned with predicting businesses failures. Chairman Culver asked if the businesses named were ok with being named and if not, suggested getting their permission first or generalize it by saying Main Street businesses. Selectman Staples likes having the specific names to give it that personal feel. Mrs. Jensen will talk with the businesses. Chairman Culver said in the section about unpaid taxes there is more to it than high taxes, that there are other reasons for it. Selectman

Laleme told the Board she spoke with Mr. Rudik whose is the developer interested in Baker Brook and said he wants to negotiate with Northern Pass and offer them a portion of land that would be off 302 behind the proposed Hotel in exchange for the parcel they were planning on putting the transition station on. Selectman Laleme said Mr. Rudik was asking for the Board's support on that. The Board said it is not their place to support this. Cheryl Jensen said Dawn Ferringo mentioned there is property on 116 that someone is looking to sell that would be great for the transition station. Mrs. Jensen will edit the letter based on the discussion from the Board. The Board determined they will meet on Tuesday January 19th at 5:30 before the budget hearing to review the revised letter.

The Board discussed the Warrant Articles. The Board discussed whether or not to do a Warrant Article to purchase a cruiser or to put money into the Capital Reserve. Frank Claffey will get interest rate #'s for the Board. Julian Czarny asked if the Town has gotten behind on Capital Reserve money for the cruiser because it has been voted down and was told yes. He said there will now be an expense because of the interest and the voters should know that and should remind them at the deliberative. Chairman Culver said we are behind in all Capital Reserves and need to educate the voters. Mr. Czarny asked if maintaining the Capital Reserves keeps the tax rate steady and was told yes. The Board discussed the Highway Block Grant and the possibility of doing a Warrant Article that says the money received from the Block Grant will go into a Capital Reserve Fund to be used for highway purchases and uses. Selectman Laleme said the people wouldn't be able to vote on it every year that way like all the other Capital Reserve's. Chief Ho-Sing-Loy said the Board still has to approve expenditures anyway. The Board did not add this Warrant Article. The Board discussed the ambulance and it was stated that currently our ambulance is broken down and we are borrowing one at no cost from Calex. The Board discussed the options of refurbishing our existing ambulance or buying a new one and asked Mr. Claffey to get % rates on that as well. Chairman Culver said he thinks it would be best to purchase a new one and said we got 15 years out of our current one. Selectman Glavac agreed purchasing a new one was better. Selectman Staples said she would like to hear from Chief Anderson about what his opinion is.

The Board discussed creating a Capital Reserve Fund to prepare for a Transfer Station in 5 to 6 years when the landfill closes. Selectmen Blanchard and Laleme looked into the costs from our previous transfer station and agreed we should put in approx. \$25,000.00 for the next 5 to 6 years. Richard Ubaldo suggested using revenue from the landfill to offset that. Selectman Glavac suggested using the difference of the increased host fee (.75 per ton) to the prior host fee (.25 per ton) and putting that in the Capital Reserve Fund. Selectman Laleme suggested using that money but just taking \$25,000.00 from it and not the entire difference. There was discussion about the wording of the article and different things to call it other than Transfer Station. The Wording will be worked on.

The Board reviewed abatements. The first abatement was denied in 2014 and they appealed to the BTLA. The BTLA asked that a settlement try to be reached. The Assessor said the case wasn't presented accurately in 2014 and the assessor is now suggesting we settle for a value of \$224,500. (request was for \$210,000.00, town assessed it for \$281,390.00). Selectman

Blanchard moved to approve the recommendation from our assessors and process the abatement plus interest for 2014 and 2015. Selectman Glavac seconded. Carried 5-0.

Chairman Culver moved to approve a tax refund for credit balance for Map/Lot 406-022-008 for \$25.94. Selectman Blanchard seconded. Carried 5-0.

Chairman Culver moved to approve a tax refund for a credit balance for Map/Lot 201-036 for \$13.91. Selectman Blanchard seconded. Carried 5-0.

Chairman Culver moved to approve a tax refund for a credit balance for Map/Lot 204-106 for \$8.92. Selectman Staples seconded. Carried 5-0.

Chairman Culver moved to approve a tax refund for a credit balance for Map/Lot 203-063 for \$21.73. Selectman Blanchard seconded. Carried 5-0.

Chairman Culver moved to approve a tax refund for a credit balance for Map/Lot 206-002-042 for \$404.10. Selectman Blanchard seconded. Carried 5-0.

Chairman Culver moved to approve a tax refund for a credit balance for Map/Lot 403-026-003 for \$22.17. Selectman Glavac seconded. Carried 5-0.

Chairman Culver moved to approve a tax refund due to an overpayment for Map/Lot 405-006 for \$98.81. Selectman Staples seconded. Carried 5-0.

Chairman Culver moved to approve a tax refund due to an overpayment for Map/Lot 420-001 for \$54.30. Selectman Blanchard seconded. Carried 5-0.

At 8:50 the Board took a quick recess so the cameraman could replace the tape.

The Board reviewed a request from a taxpayer asking for the interest to be removed from their account due to late payment because they said they never received the bill. The Board discussed how they have consistently denied these kind of requests and decided to remain consistent with that.

The Board reviewed the minutes. Selectman Blanchard moved to approve the minutes from 12/21/15. Selectman Staples seconded. Carried 5-0.

Selectman Laleme moved to approve the minutes from 01/04/16. Selectman Blanchard seconded. Carried 3-0 (Chairman Culver and Selectman Staples abstained).

The Board discussed allowing Randy from Profile Technologies to have access to the food pantry on the weekend to work on replacing our computers and said it was ok.

Respectfully submitted,
April Hibberd
Administrative Assistant