

Bethlehem Board of Selectmen  
Meeting Minutes  
Bethlehem Selectmen Office  
January 19, 2015

Present: Chairperson Laleme, Selectman Blanchard, Selectman Culver, Selectman Glavac.

At 6:00 pm Chairperson Laleme opened the budget hearing and read the public notice for the budget hearing.

Chairperson Laleme said she feels the budget was trimmed too lean and that there is no recourse in the budget if anything goes wrong. She said she feels more should be put back in the budget.

The Board reviewed the budget and pointed out the differences and whether there were increases or decreases. When discussing the legal budget Pat Doughty said the Planning Board should use the Municipal Services for less cost. He also asked the Board if there would be fewer properties for sale because of less deeding. Chairperson Laleme said the amount of properties deeded is getting less every year. When discussing the Police budget Pat Doughty asked why there is still so much left in his budget this year. Chairperson Laleme said more expenses are still coming in. Clare Brown asked why we have 4 cruisers and Selectman Culver said this past year we had 3 cruisers and at one point 2 of them were broken down which put us down to 1. He said \$2,500.00 was put into the Impala and that was going to be traded in for the new cruiser but they would only give \$500.00 for a trade allowance. The Board decided it made more sense to keep it for traveling to training, and court etc until it no longer runs. Chief Ho-Sing-Loy said the hours and mileage on the cruisers add up because they put 100 miles on a cruiser per shift. He also said you need to have back -ups in case one breaks just like the highway dept. Chief Ho-Sing-Loy said having the extra cruisers help alleviate mileage on the newer cruisers and pointed out that they go to court in Littleton, Plymouth, Lancaster, and Haverhill.

There was discussion about the dispatch budget and how it has increased because of the increase in calls and their cost has gone up as well. There was discussion about the ambulance budget and it was noted the revenue generated from the ambulance service was \$43,519.00. Clare Brown asked if we are still involved with area emergency management and if we ever got anywhere with getting a generator for the Town Building. Chief Anderson said we are still involved with the area emergency management and that we could apply for a grant for the generator but there would also be a cost to the Town because it is a 50/50 grant. Chief Anderson pointed out that there are several places in Town that have generators including Profile, the library, and Balance.

Rita Farrell asked which employees receive salaries and who receives retirement. She was told employees who work more than 34 hours get retirement, Department Heads get salaries, and employees who work more than 40 hours a week get benefits. Mary Jackson said the Tax

Collector/Town Clerk doesn't get benefits and she was told she is an elected official not an employee and if she wants to request benefits it has to be done by Warrant Article. Mrs. Farrell asked the amount of the salaries for employees and Chairperson Laleme told her they do not publish that information but it is public information if anyone wants it they can go to the office and get it. Mrs. Farrell asked what the budget amount is for just the pool and she was told \$48,827.00.

Chairperson Laleme said the Board voted to use \$294,000.00 to keep the tax rate at \$7.12 which is the same rate as the year before. She said the tax rate for the proposed budget with all the Warrant Articles would be approx. \$7.73. Chairperson Laleme said the proposed budget not including Warrant Articles is \$2,748,032.00.

The Board reviewed the Warrant Articles. There was a typo on Article six for the fire truck capital reserve. The amount needs to be changed from \$5,000.00 to \$10,000.00.

There was discussion about the Capital Reserve for Broadband and the purpose of it. Selectman Glavac said there will be a plan to provide Broadband to areas of Town that doesn't currently have it. This will also help with obtaining grants. Rita Farrell asked what areas are not being served and Selectman Glavac said he doesn't have that info yet.

The Board discussed the Warrant Article for the Loader Backhoe and decided to leave out *2015 Caterpillar 420F21T* to just say ....for the purpose of leasing a Loader Backhoe....Brett Jackson said they will be getting \$27,500.00 as a trade value for the 1998 being traded in.

There was discussion about the Warrant Article for the GIS mapping and Cheryl Jensen asked why not put it in the budget. Chairperson Laleme said money is tight so people need to pick and choose what they want to spend money on. Mrs. Jensen said she was concerned people wouldn't understand what the purpose of this is.

The Board discussed the wording of the Warrant Article for the Backhoe and decided to add *this purchase is to replace the current 1998 Loader.*

Alan Jackson said if the Town will be paying to have someone video-taping the meetings then the Town should receive a hard copy of the video. Julian Czarny said a copy would go to channel 2 and said someone could make a copy for the Town. Mr. Jackson said again if the Town is going to spend money then the Town should receive a copy.

Chairperson Laleme said the superintendant of schools has asked the Board to consider giving the school the entire Cedarcroft lot to make a more affordable parking lot. The cost for the parking lot with the land out back will cost approx. \$200,000.00 because of the slope of the land. Cheryl Jensen asked what the Town was going to do with it; Chairperson Laleme said the Town has tried to sell it 4 times unsuccessfully. Clare Brown said she thinks it's a grand idea to give the lot to the school. Selectman Glavac said he would like to know how much the new project would cost compared to the original project. Chairperson Laleme said the Board needs

to decide whether to put this on as a Warrant Article or not. Cheryl Jensen said it would be difficult to vote on if the costs are unknown. Selectman Glavac said it could have a comparable value of Balance if sold commercially. Clare Brown said the longer the building sits there it becomes more of a hazard and eyesore. Mary Jackson suggested that the Town demolish the building and then sell the lot. Selectman Glavac said Balance has been the only private business in Bethlehem in the last 7 years and said to lower the tax rate by \$1.00 we need 20 balances. Selectman Glavac stressed that what we need in Bethlehem to lower the tax rate is growth.

Rita Farrell asked about how the legal budget gets broken up. The Board decided to allocate \$47,000.00 for general legal expense and \$3,000.00 for Zoning/Code Enforcement.

At 8:00 Chairperson Laleme moved to close the budget hearing. Selectman Blanchard seconded. Carried 4-0.

Chairperson Laleme moved to approve the default budget. Selectman Blanchard seconded. Carried 4-0.

Chairperson Laleme again said she feels the budget was trimmed too much and suggested adding more to professional consulting and computer expense. Selectman Glavac said he is ok with the budget as is. Selectman Culver said he would want to add to it at Deliberative instead of tonight. Chairperson Laleme said she thinks there will be another budget freeze next November if it stays as it is. Chairperson Laleme moved to add \$100.00 for Master Plan making it \$8,100.00. Selectman Culver seconded. Selectman Glavac said the Planning Board could find the \$100.00 from somewhere. Frank Claffey said they have a contractual obligation. Selectman Culver said he believes they can find \$100.00. Motion failed 1-3 (Chairperson Laleme in favor).

The Board discussed the new accounting to allocate the fuel expense and discussed increasing the GGB fuel amount. The Board did not increase the fuel amount.

Chairperson Laleme moved to accept the proposed budget. Selectman Blanchard seconded. Carried 4-0.

The Board voted to recommend or not recommend the Special Warrant Articles:

Article #3 (Police Cruiser Capital Reserve) Chairperson Laleme moved to recommend this article. Selectman Blanchard seconded. Carried 4-0.

Article #4 (Police equipment Capital Reserve) Chairperson Laleme moved to recommend this article. Selectman Blanchard seconded. Carried 4-0.

Article #5 (Fire Dept. Emergency Safety Equip. Capital Reserve) Chairperson Laleme moved to recommend this article. Selectman Glavac seconded. Carried 4-0.

Article #6 (Fire Truck Capital Reserve) Chairperson Laleme moved to recommend this article. Selectman Glavac seconded. Carried 4-0.

Article #7 (Ambulance Capital Reserve) Chairperson Laleme moved to recommend this article. Selectman Blanchard seconded. Carried 4-0.

Article #8 (Assessing Capital Reserve) Selectman Blanchard moved to recommend this article. Chairperson Laleme seconded. Carried 4-0.

Article #9 (Broadband Capital Reserve) Selectman Glavac moved to recommend this article. Chairperson Laleme seconded. Carried 4-0.

Article #10 (purchase Loader Backhoe) Selectman Blanchard moved to recommend this article. Selectman Glavac seconded. Carried 4-0.

Article #11 (GIS Mapping) Chairperson Laleme moved to recommend this article. Selectman Glavac seconded. Carried 4-0.

Article #12 (Gazebo live music) Selectman Glavac said the Select Board should not recommend any petitioned warrant articles and also said that he supports the cause of all and would vote for them but doesn't believe the Select Board should recommend them. The Board discussed this and all agreed the Board shouldn't have to either recommend or not recommend but they have to vote per law. Chairperson Laleme moved to recommend this article. Selectman Culver seconded. Carried 3-1 (Selectman Glavac opposed).

Article #13 (Grafton County Senior Citizens Council) Selectman Glavac said he supports the cause but doesn't believe Select Board should vote to recommend. Selectman Blanchard moved to recommend this article. Chairperson Laleme seconded. Carried 3-1 (Selectman Glavac opposed).

Article #14 (Tri-County Cap) Selectman Glavac said he supports the cause but doesn't believe the Select Board should vote to recommend. Chairperson Laleme moved to recommend this article. Selectman Blanchard seconded. Carried 3-1 (Selectman Glavac opposed).

Article #15 (The Center for New Beginnings) Selectman Glavac said he supports the cause but doesn't believe the Select Board should vote to recommend. Selectman Blanchard moved to recommend this article. Chairperson Laleme seconded. Carried 3-1 (Selectman Glavac seconded).

Article #16 (Ammonoosuc Community Health Services, Inc.) Selectman Glavac said he supports the cause but doesn't believe the Select Board should vote to recommend. Selectman Blanchard moved to recommend this article. Chairperson Laleme seconded. Carried 3-1 (Selectman Glavac opposed).

Article #17 (Northern Human Services) Selectman Glavac said he supports the cause but doesn't believe the Select Board should vote to recommend. Chairperson Laleme moved to recommend this article. Selectman Blanchard seconded. Carried 3-1 (Selectman Glavac opposed).

Article #18 (Boys & Girls Club) Selectman Blanchard moved to not recommend this article due to having a Town Rec program. Chairperson Laleme seconded. Carried 4-0.

Article #19 (WREN Farmer's Market) Selectman Glavac said he supports the cause but doesn't believe the Select Board should vote to recommend. Selectman Culver moved to not recommend and said the warrant article does not indicate what the money is for. Chairperson Laleme seconded. Carried 3-1 (Selectman Blanchard opposed).

Article #20 (Above the Notch Humane Society) Selectman Glavac said he supports the cause but doesn't believe the Select Board should vote to recommend. Selectman Blanchard moved to recommend this article. Chairperson Laleme seconded. Carried 3-1 (Selectman Glavac opposed).

Article #21 (Videotaping Select Board meetings) Chairperson Laleme moved to not recommend this article. Selectman Glavac seconded. Carried 3-1 (Selectman Blanchard opposed).

The Board discussed whether or not to create a warrant article giving the school the entire Cedarcroft lot. Chairperson Laleme moved to create a Warrant Article to deed Cedarcroft lot to the Elementary School. The motion failed because there was no second.

The Board discussed a request from Ammonoosuc River Local Advisory Committee for \$50.00. Chairperson Laleme moved to give the \$50.00. Selectman Blanchard seconded. Chairperson Laleme said they monitor the river and put out a report. Carried 4-0.

The Board reviewed the minutes from the Master Plan meeting. Selectman Blanchard moved to approve the minutes. Selectman Glavac seconded. Carried 3-0 (Selectman Culver abstained).

The Board reviewed the mutual aid agreement and signed it.

The Board discussed the Website renewal and wants to discuss the website with the person who does the Visitor Center website.

The Board reviewed the minutes from 01/05/15. Selectman Glavac moved to approve the minutes. Selectman Blanchard seconded. Carried 3-0 (Selectman Culver abstained).

Selectman Glavac said it was not his person opinion to not recommend the petitioned warrant articles but he doesn't think the Board should be making recommendation. Rita Farrell said the Board should ask Representative to revise the RSA that says the Board has to.

Chairperson Laleme moved to go into non-public session per 91A for pending litigation. Selectman Culver seconded. Chairperson Laleme did roll call with all members agreeing to go into non-public session.

The Board discussed pending litigation.

At 9:30pm Chairperson Laleme moved to come out of non-public session. Selectman Blanchard seconded. Carried 4-0.

At 9:30pm Chairperson Laleme moved to adjourn. Selectman Blanchard seconded. Carried 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,  
April Hibberd  
Administrative Assistant