

Bethlehem Board of Selectmen  
Meeting Minutes  
Bethlehem Selectmen Office  
January 19, 2016

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

Chairman Culver opened the meeting at 5:34.

The Board reviewed the letter drafted by Cheryl Jensen for the Select Board to apply for intervener status for the Northern Pass project. Selectman Staples said she thought the letter was very well written. The Board discussed a letter received from Peter Grote that confirmed Franconia will apply for intervener status. Selectman Laleme said the platform stated in the letter from Mr. Grote is right on. Selectman Laleme updated the Board on her conversation with the potential developer for the Baker Brook property and said he made an offer to Northern Pass about the offer of “switching” properties so the transition station will be behind his proposed development instead. Mrs. Jensen told the Board that everything (concerns) needs to be listed in the letter or it can’t be brought up at the hearing. The Board said they want the letter sent to Franconia so the attorney’s can review it if the offer of that being no charge still applies.

The Board reviewed a sign permit application for David Wiley. Chairman Culver moved to approve the sign permit. Selectman Staples seconded. Carried 5-0.

The Board reviewed an abatement they previously approved but it now has the interest included in it. Chairman Culver moved to approve the amount for abatement for Map/Lot 407-035-019 for \$3554.03. Selectman Blanchard seconded. Carried 5-0.

Steve Healey told the Board he is not able to obtain title insurance on the property he purchased by auction from the town. He said his lawyer has advised him to walk away from it. He asked the Board if they would accept the deposit amount of \$3000.00 as payment in full for the property. The Board said they would have to check with our attorney.

The Board discussed the need for ballot clerks and having the meeting room set up for elections. The Board will set the meeting room up on Feb 8<sup>th</sup> after the Select Board meeting.

The Board discussed putting an ad out for the country club manager position. It will be placed in the Courier, Caledonian Record, and the Union Leader.

Chris Jensen said Councilor Kenney will be coming this week about the Culvert project.

At 6:00 pm Chairman Culver opened the Budget Hearing and read the hearing notice.

**Town Clerk budget:** Increased this year due to there being 4 elections this year.

**Assessing:** Down due to assessing clerk taking on more responsibilities.

**Legal:** There was discussion about whether or not to add more to the legal budget because of the Northern Pass project. It stayed at the proposed \$35,000.00.

**Planning & Zoning:** Dick Robie asked why the clerk salary increased and was told it was due to a shift of duties and not due to a raise or more hours. Rita Farrell asked if enough was in the legal budget due to anticipated projects coming up and was told they believe so.

**GGB:** Mary Jackson told the Board about a BMSI software program for cemeteries that costs \$500.00 plus the yearly cost. She will get the amount for the yearly costs. Clare Brown thinks it would be great to have.

**Town Insurance:** Chris Jensen asked if the Unemployment expense was all from the Country Club and was told all except one employee.

**Visitor Center:** Mrs. Farrell asked how many visitors it gets and how many days are they open. Selectman Blanchard said he could get those numbers and said they were open an additional week and for Columbus Day. Frank Claffey asked if they were going to raise the budget because they would have gone over this year if they didn't have the money to offset the expenditure.

**Police:** There was discussion about salaries for the Chief and the officers and if they are comparable to area towns. Selectman Blanchard said they are still low but they are getting more competitive. There was also discussion about having 24 hour coverage and was said a few years ago the people wanted 24 hour coverage. Chairman Culver pointed out that we have Route 302, 116, Rt 3, and interstate 93 in Bethlehem. It was noted the proposed salaries are down because we have an anticipated date of return for the deployed officer so will not have to budget his salary for the whole year like we have had to do in previous years. Carol Kerivan asked why the proposed fuel amount went down so much and was said because the price of gas is down and we are locked into the price.

**Fire:** Chief Anderson said this proposed budget is very bare bones. Chairman Culver asked if he needed to add anything to it and the Chief said no that he would make do with it.

**Dispatch:** It was explained that we went over this year because we only know the first two payment amounts so it is an estimate and it is based on calls. Chief Anderson said Fire and Ambulance calls are up. Chief Anderson did say the county dispatch is a high quality dispatch.

**Building Inspection:** It was noted this is an estimate because it depends on what is going on for building.

**Highway:** Chairman Culver asked Road Agent, Brett Jackson, if he needed to increase his budget at all. Mr. Jackson said he is taking a hit in hot top because he reduced it because of hiring the additional employee. He also pointed out that he only had \$3000.00 left in his budget this year and if there had been any snow storms he would have gone over budget. Selectman Glavac said if there is a need for more hot top then it should be budgeted for. Selectman Staples said the roads are not going to fix themselves and agreed more should be budgeted for if it is needed. Mr. Jackson said the traffic in Bethlehem has increased which affects the roads and said there are 52 miles of town roads and only 7 miles of that are dirt

roads. Selectman Blanchard said to increase the asphalt line back to \$150,000.00 and the Board agreed with that.

**Ambulance:** Chief Anderson said the ambulance had broken down and had the transmission fixed which cost \$4000.00. He suggested increasing the ambulance maintenance line due to that by \$3000.00 making it \$6000.00. The Board agreed with that. It was noted the ambulance revenue was \$59570.00 for 2015.

**Emergency Management:** This is in case something happens and we need to apply for FEMA money.

**Welfare:** Cheryl Jensen asked why there isn't an amount budgeted for food pantry and was told it was managed by WREN and they handle all the financials for it.

**Recreation:** Selectman Laleme said the proposed amount will be offset by \$25,000.00 from the money earned from the revolving fund. Mrs. Jensen asked why the big increase for pool salaries and Rec Director, Rhienna Miscio, said they will have more programs, be open longer and need to be more competitive with paying lifeguards. It was noted the pool portion of the Rec budget is \$49,638.00.

**Library:** Carol Kerivan said all other budgets including for emergency services and road services were all reduced but the library goes up and they don't give the details. Chairman Culver said \$4000.00 of the increase is due to maintenance costs and \$11,500.00 is due to increased salary which is partly due to raises and partly due to the additional hours for getting work done during closed hours. Selectman Glavac said they are looking for input from the public. Mrs. Kerivan said the salary increase should be looked at. Selectman Staples said last year's budget was not sustainable because they have a 70% increase in usage since going to the new building and said they were under budgeted last year and would have to cut services if they don't get the increase. Clare Brown asked if they get any revenue for the programs they offer and was told no. Mrs. Brown asked if the Library pays for programs and was told they do pay about \$3100.00. Selectman Laleme said she thinks it is a staffing pattern issue and that we all have those issues. Chairman Culver said the Board cannot dictate how they spend their money but can decide how much to budget for the Library. Rita Farrell asked if the state contributes to the library and was told no and suggested the library be asked to adjust their budget before the deliberative. Selectman Blanchard said \$11,500.00 is too much and that someone from the library should have been here tonight. He also said he would like input from them. Mike Kerivan said he feels it shows taxpayers they think it is a done deal and suggested taking out the portion for raises and ask for the detail. The Board said they have the detail budget. The Board will reach out to the library about reviewing their budget to see where they could cut.

**Conservation Commission:** Selectman Laleme asked if any money was going into their savings for 2015. Mrs. Jensen said very little (about \$10.00). Mrs. Jensen did say they used some money from their savings for a scientist for Northern Pass study.

**Country Club:** Selectman Glavac suggested making the proposed budget the same as 2015's. He said in previous years it has generated over \$300,000 in revenues. Selectman Laleme said 2015 was the first year it made revenue. Chairman Culver said it was because the expenses were cut in order to make revenue and we need the revenues up to upkeep the course and club. He also said things were not done that should have been because the revenues weren't there. Selectman Staples said she would like to see revenues increased and match the expenditures to that. Carol Kerivan asked if they made \$4000.00 because they expenses were

not expended and was told yes. She also said her guests always pick Maplewood. Selectman Blanchard said two courses can co-exist and said they work well together and refer each other. Chris Jensen asked if it will lower the tax rate and was told it will never lower the tax rate because the money stays in the club to improve it. Selectman Laleme said there is a mechanism to get money out of it and that it takes a town vote. Victor Hoffman said it needs to increase sales and increase membership. He also said the restaurant is in bad shape and the product needs to be good for sales to increase. Mrs. Farrell said it is a benefit to the town and asked about having it insulated so it could be a year round community place. Selectman Blanchard said it is a Donald Ross course and has value to the Town and brings tourists to town. Richard Ubaldo said the course will go downhill if money is not put into it and the restaurant has to be properly managed and said people won't come back if they don't get what they need. He asked if it made sense to lease it. Dick Robie said he wouldn't want it sold. He said it used to be owned by innkeepers and said now he doesn't see many cars there but Maplewood is always busy. Mr. Robie also said the restaurant is poorly run. Mr. Jensen asked if the Board is looking for a new manager and was told yes. Victor Hoffman said Maplewood puts a lot of money into theirs and said memberships should require spending certain amount in Rest. Cheryl Jensen asked if they were asking for more money in the budget for this and was told yes but it doesn't come from the taxpayer and explained the budgeted revenues and expenditures match. Chairman Culver said it would need to be monitored so they don't end up in the red and explained if we do not budget more revenue then they can't expend more. Carol Kerivan suggested they put in an incentive based on membership sales. Mrs. Miscio suggested utilizing Media, Facebook and website more to advertise.

The Board reviewed the Warrant Articles and voted on whether to recommend or not recommend.

Article 7: (Capital Reserve for Highway Truck) Brett Jackson said he would like to raise the amount from \$60,000.00 to \$80,000.00. The Board changed the amount to \$80,000.00. Chairman Culver moved to recommend this article. Selectman Blanchard seconded. Carried 5-0.

Article 8: (Capital Reserve for Police Cruiser) Chief Ho-Sing-Loy said he can wait another year to purchase a new cruiser. The amount for this warrant article was increased from \$20,000.00 to \$23,000.00. Selectman Blanchard moved to recommend this article. Selectman Staples seconded. Carried 5-0.

Article 9: (Capital Reserve for Police Specialized Equipment) Selectman Blanchard moved to recommend this article. Selectman Glavac seconded. Carried 5-0.

Article 10: (Capital Reserve for Emergency Safety Equipment) Chairman Culver moved to approve this article. Selectman Glavac seconded. Carried 5-0.

Article 11: (to purchase a new ambulance) Article will be re-written. Board recommends the purchase of a new ambulance.

Article 12: (Capital Reserve for Assessing) Selectman Blanchard moved to recommend this article. Selectman Glavac seconded. Carried 5-0.

Article 13: (Capital Reserve for Tech Needs) Chairman Culver moved to recommend this article. Selectman Blanchard seconded. Carried 5-0.

Article 14: (GIS Mapping) Chairman Culver moved to recommend this article. Selectman Glavac seconded. Carried 5-0.

Article 15: Frank Claffey said the Trust Funds are not mentioned in the article and suggested adding that after the words..capital reserve funds. The Board agreed and added the additional language.

Article 16: (Capital Reserve Fund for Transfer Station/Solid Waste disposal). The Board did not want Transfer Station in the article, just solid waste disposal. Chairman Culver moved to recommend this article. Selectman Blanchard seconded. Carried 5-0.

Article 17: (Petitioned – Gazebo Concerts) Selectman Glavac said he will not vote to recommend any petitioned warrant article. Chairman Culver said the Board has no control over them and the numbers could be changed at the deliberative so he will also not recommend the petitioned warrant articles. Selectman Blanchard moved to not recommend this article. Selectman Glavac seconded. Carried 5-0.

Article 18: (Petitioned - Grafton County Senior Center) Chairman Culver moved to not recommend this article. Selectman Blanchard seconded. Carried 5-0.

Article 19: (Petitioned – Northern Human Services) Chairman Culver moved to not recommend this article. Selectman Staples seconded. Carried 5-0.

Article 20: (Petitioned – North Country Home Health & Hospice) Chairman Culver moved to not recommend this article. Selectman Glavac seconded. Carried 5-0.

Article 21: (Petitioned – Tri-County Cap) Chairman Culver moved to not recommend this article. Selectman Blanchard seconded. Carried 5-0.

Article 22: (Petitioned – Video Recording Select Board Meetings) Chairman Culver moved to not recommend this article. Selectman Blanchard seconded. Carried 5-0.

Article 23: (Petitioned – Committee for Country Club) Chairman Culver moved to not recommend this article. Selectman Staples seconded. Carried 5-0.

Article 24: (Petitioned – Big Money Out of Politics) Chairman Culver moved to not recommend this article. Selectman Blanchard seconded. Carried 5-0.

Article 25: (Petitioned – Boys & Girls Club) Chairman Culver moved to not recommend this article. Selectman Blanchard seconded. Carried 5-0.

Article 26: (Petitioned – Above the Notch Humane Society) Chairman Culver moved to not recommend this article. Selectman Staples seconded. Carried 5-0.

Article 27: (Petitioned – Center for New Beginnings) Chairman Culver moved to not recommend this article. Selectman Staples seconded. Carried 5-0.

The Board discussed meeting Friday at 5:30 to finalize the budget numbers for the library and invite them to come and to finalize the Country Club budget.

At 10:07 Chairman Culver closed the budget hearing.

At 10:07 Chairman Culver moved to adjourn. Selectman Blanchard seconded. Carried 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,  
April Hibberd  
Administrative Assistant