

Bethlehem Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes

Bethlehem Town Building Meeting Room

March 25, 2013

Present: Chairman Blanchard, Selectman Fiorentino, Selectman Laleme, Selectman Glavac, Selectmen Culver.

Chairman Blanchard opened the meeting at 6:30.

Nancy Comeau from NH fish and Game came to talk to the Board about her concern of the bears becoming a problem again in Bethlehem. She said she wants to be proactive before the bears come out. Ms. Comeau asked the Board to remind residents of the Wild Animal Ordinance by putting out a notice. She said she talked with Kevin Roy and will be meeting with him to come up with ideas to help residents keep the bears out of the garbage. Chairman Blanchard said the Town could put out notice to residents. Chairman Blanchard asked Ms. Comeau to let the Board know the outcome of her meeting with Kevin Roy. Chief Ho-Sing-Loy said it was put on the website last year but not many people know of the website. It was determined they would put a notice in the newspaper.

Chairman Blanchard opened the meeting for a public information meeting for a federal grant/loan under the USDA Rural Development Community Facilities Program that the library applied for to purchase interior furnishings for the new library. Laura Clerkin was present to answer any questions. Laura said she applied for \$50,000.00 but didn't expect to get the whole amount but she did say she received a letter that the application was accepted. Laura also explained that it is a grant/loan program and she requested the grant but would explore a loan if it were offered. Julian Czarny asked if the grant/loan doesn't come through how will the furniture be purchased. Laura said they have the funds to furnish the library but the grants and fundraising will help them to get the extra's. Frank Claffey said the Town is just the conduit for the grant; just administering it. Chairman Blanchard asked if there were any more questions. Chairman Blanchard closed the information meeting at 6:40.

Robert Uncles was in to talk to the Board about a tax issue. A friend with Robert, Richard Woolsey, spoke on Robert's behalf and explained that Robert didn't know his taxes were not being paid until he received his eviction notice. He said the bills for 10+ years were mailed to his parent's house in Manchester. Mr. Woolsey said Robert's parents paid his taxes for him and when his parent's died he assumed his siblings took over paying them. Mr. Woolsey said all the bills and notices were returned to the town as undeliverable for years and questioned why the Town never looked into why they were being returned. Robert said he assumed his siblings were paying because he never received anything from the town. Selectman Culver said he

sympathizes but it is the landowner's responsibility to keep the taxpayer's office up to date on current address. Selectman Laleme asked what they are asking the Town to do. Richard said Robert would like to pay the base taxes for the last 10 years as quickly as he can with a written agreement and have the eviction notice stayed. Selectman Glavac asked if they have a plan to present now. Richard said Robert could pay a 1/3 right away with the remaining to be paid within a year including the current year's taxes. Chairman Blanchard told Robert to come up with something concrete and present it to the Board in writing. Selectman Culver said the Board needs to be fair to everyone and will need attorney to look at the agreement. Selectman Culver also said in the past this Board hasn't waived interest and that the taxpayers need incentive to pay their taxes. Selectman Laleme suggested the proposal be based on highest amount they can pay.

Roland Shick came before the Board concerning his eviction notice. Mr. Shick said he was in the process of paying the Town back in full and redeemed one property for \$20,000.00 and said he told Mary when he got the deed back his son was going to take the deed to the bank and get a loan. He said he is in the process of getting financing to buy other 2 pieces back. He said when he redeemed the one piece he paid the legal fees on all three properties because of what he is planning. He asked the Board if they knew the whole situation. Chairman Blanchard said he did not but the Town has followed the RSA's. Selectman Culver said as of Dec. 31st 2012 1.4 million was owed in back taxes and the Board never received anything in writing from Roland so the Board needs to do what is right for the Town. Roland said the Town broke the RSA by not enforcing the RSA's previously by not deeding for all those years and that this Board should take that into consideration. Selectman Laleme asked when the bank is going to make its decision and asked Roland to have the bank send the Board a letter stating when they will make their decision. Roland said his son lives with him and is a landscaper and has 10 to 20 thousand dollars worth of "inventory" in the ground that won't be able to be dug up by April 15th. Chairman Blanchard said the Board needs something in writing from him. Selectman Laleme said Mary told the Board what Roland was planning but that the Board never heard from him. Selectman Culver told Roland to come to the Board with concrete evidence from the bank and the Board may stay the eviction. Mary Jackson told Roland that she had given him the book and page number from the deed so it could have been acted on sooner.

Chairman Blanchard told the Board that he talked with Brenda about the land on 116 and the easement question. Cheryl Jensen said she thought that was all signed with ACT. Selectman Culver said it was signed but there is now a question because the abutting lot where the Transfer Station was is now vacant and they are asking for more fees in case the Town sells that lot. The Board feels that should be addressed when/if it sells.

The Board went over the Liaison list (attached). Selectman Culver moved to accept the list as discussed. Chairman Blanchard seconded. Carried 5-0.

Selectman Laleme moved to appoint Chairman Blanchard as Chairman. Selectman Glavac seconded. Selectman Laleme said she doesn't want the Board to fall into the habit of having the same people as Chair/Vice-chair over and over. Carried 4-0. Chairman Blanchard abstained.

Selectman Fiorentino moved to nominate Selectman Culver as Vice-Chair. Selectman Glavac seconded. Carried 4-0. Selectman Culver abstained.

The Board read the request letter from Grafton County Senior Citizens Council for their allocation to be dispersed now. There was also a request from the Boys & Girls Club. The funds for the agencies that request allocations have always been paid out in Dec. Frank said there would be a cost of \$254.00 (interest from TAN) if the agencies were paid now. Chairman Blanchard moved to send a letter saying that it is the practice of the Town of Bethlehem to pay at the end of the year after the 2nd tax billing. Selectman Culver seconded. Carried 5-0. Selectman Culver moved to pay all allocations in December. Selectman Fiorentino seconded. Carried 5-0.

Chairman Blanchard read a letter from Sonya Clark asking permission to “paint” the town purple for Relay for Life to recognize National Cancer Awareness Month. The request is to decorate the Gazebo with purple banners and ribbons from April 20th – Sunday April 28th. Selectman Laleme moved to allow this. Chairman Blanchard seconded. Selectman Culver said there were nails and staples left in the gazebo last year. Carried 5-0.

Chairman Blanchard read the DRA action report. In the report it was recommended that the Town do an Assessment Review this year. Selectman Laleme moved that we do the Assessment Review. Chairman Blanchard seconded. Carried 5-0.

Chairman Blanchard reviewed safety committee information. Chairman Blanchard said he talked to Phil about the fence and Selectman Laleme said the safety committee was asked to review the safety manual. Frank said it was passed out to be reviewed.

Chairman Blanchard read a letter that was written to the Bethlehem Emergency Services requesting that funds in the amount of \$1,731.02 be paid to the Town. This money was intended for the Recreation program and was money donated or raised from fundraisers. Selectman Laleme moved we send the letter. Selectman Fiorentino seconded. Carried 4-0. Selectman Culver abstained.

The Board discussed having our fuel suppliers bid on the service. Frank said we are getting propane from 2 different sources. The Board said they would look into this further.

The Board reviewed the letter from the auditor’s about the 2011 audit.

The Board discussed the minutes from 03/11/13 and 03/19/13. Chairman Blanchard moved to accept the minutes as amended (change time Mike arrived on 03/19/13 to 5:35). Selectman Fiorentino seconded. Carried 5-0.

Selectman Laleme brought up our designated smoking area and would like to move the area across the parking lot near the storage trailers. She said that the current designated area is at our handicap access entryway and should not be there. Selectman Laleme moved to move the

smoking designated area to the other side of the parking lot near the storage bins. Chairman Blanchard seconded. Carried 5-0. A memo will be sent out.

Selectman Glavac said we started the deed process in Oct. so now the Board needs to look at selling land only properties and get an auction company or do sealed bid and schedule it in 90 days. Selectman Glavac said he would like the town owned properties listed in the Town Report to be included. Selectman Culver said the previous owner needs to be given a 90 day notice.

Alan Jackson asked about the deeded properties listed in the Town Report on Page 16. He said ½ the owners are unknown. Selectman Laleme said there is a process to go through when the owner is unknown. Selectman Culver said the last time the Town auctioned off property was in 2003. Cheryl Jensen said the Board should allow people to do everything they can to pay their taxes. Chairman Blanchard said the Board isn't looking to throw people out.

Frank said the rate he got for the TAN is .875 from Woodsville Guaranty Bank. He said he will get the paperwork ready for their signatures. Chairman Blanchard moved to give Frank authority to get advancement of \$400,000.00 at .875%. Selectman Culver seconded.

Alan Jackson said on Page 14 of the Town Report it shows that the Country Club has a value of 1.475 million. He asked if that was realistic.

Dick Robie said the fence for the pool is in his garage waiting for the weather to cooperate.

At 8:10 Chairman Blanchard moved to go into non-public for personnel. Selectman Glavac seconded. Chairman Blanchard did roll call with all members agreeing to go into non-public session.

At 8:35 Chairman Blanchard moved to adjourn. Selectman Fiorentino seconded. Carried 8:35.

Respectfully submitted,

April Hibberd

Administrative Assistant