

Bethlehem Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes

Bethlehem Town Building Meeting Room

June 24, 2013

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

Chairman Blanchard opened the meeting at 6:30.

Dawn Ferringo came before the Board to propose new welfare guidelines. She reviewed with the Board the Welfare Policy Allowances which she increased. She noted that they have not been increased since 2007. Dawn said she checked with area agencies to get input on what the amounts should be. Shelter allowances increased by \$50.00, phone went from \$25.00 to 30.00, transportation increased by \$10.00, and the utility will remain the same. Dawn was asked what amounts surrounding towns use. Dawn said she would call around to find out. Selectman Laleme asked what the impact on the budget would be with those increases. Dawn said she still has $\frac{3}{4}$ of her budget left and down to 4 families (from 12) who come in monthly for assistance.

Dawn discussed the Workfare program with the Board. The Board decided this needed to be looked into further. Dawn will do research on this and the allowed expenses and come back to the Board meeting on July 15th. Dawn will discuss the Workfare program with Department Head's at the July 10th Dept. Head meeting.

Rita Farrell came before the Board to discuss what businesses do for our town. Rita talked about different volunteers and what they do to beautify the town. She said none of these volunteers ask for credit for doing it. Rita said they do it because they want the town to look nice. Rita stated concern about the Casella sign that is right in front of the Welcome to Bethlehem sign at the golf course. She said she had come to the Board addressing this last year and the sign was removed after that. Rita read from a Bethlehem Heritage Society Newsletter that had a Selectmen's report from 1914. Chairman Blanchard thanked Rita for her input and said he would discuss the issue with Casella. Selectman Laleme pointed out that it is not illegal to have that sign on Town property. Selectman Laleme also pointed out that it was removed last year at the end of the season not because the Board ordered it to be removed. Rita asked if anyone can put up any sign anywhere. Chairman Blanchard pointed out that there is a hotel off of Long Hill that is not open to everyone and pointed out that is discretionary. Rita agreed that

may be true. Jeanne Robillard asked where it would stop if all people/businesses who donate get to put up a sign.

Peter Roy said Casella contributed 9 dumpsters for the library job and he said he feels anybody who contributes to this town should be recognized.

Dick Robie said the flower garden could be referred to as Mr. Casella's garden because Mrs. Millers's garden is ok. Rita said Mr. Casella would have to die first. Mr. Baker told how Rita approached him at the flower garden and told him to remove the sign as the Select Board had ordered a year ago. Mr. Baker explained that he approached Casella about donating the money for the plants and he doesn't see any problem with the sign. Chairman Blanchard again said he would be talking with Casella about the sign.

The Board discussed a request from Littleton Community Center to put a car that they will be raffling off at our Gazebo during concerts. They also requested to have a table set up to sell raffle tickets. The Board discussed how that would compete with the 50/50 raffle that is held at the concerts. Chairman Blanchard moved to decline the request. Selectman Laleme seconded. Carried 4-0.

The Board reviewed the minutes from 06/10/13 and 06/17/13. The minutes from 06/10/13 were tabled because not enough members were present to vote on them. Selectman Laleme moved to approve the minutes from 06/17/13. Selectman Fiorentino seconded. Carried 4-0.

The Board reviewed a letter from a resident requesting his taxes be reduced because of a neighboring properties deplorable condition. The Board said the letter would be referred to the assessor.

The Board discussed whether to charge for Notary services or not. Selectman Laleme said she remembers from former Administrative Assistant that there was supposed to be a charge but it never happened. April will call around to different towns to see what other towns do.

The Board discussed an ambulance write off request from Jack. Chairman Blanchard reviewed the write off policy. The Board asked the liaison to speak with Jack about the policy. Selectman Laleme said the policy does not make sense. She said 2 small amounts are being sent to collection but write off request is for a large amount. The Board all agreed the policy should be rewritten.

Selectman Glavac discussed the 3 year plan for the golf course with the Board. He will bring back revised plan after meeting on Friday with BCC management.

Selectman Fiorentino stated that David advertised at the local schools for the junior program which he thought was a great idea.

Roger Hammarberg asked the status about the proposal from the contractor who was interested in taking down the dilapidated buildings. Chairman Blanchard said the Board is looking at references for the contractor. Selectman Glavac said the sale is August 17th so may have run out of time anyways.

Rita Farrell said there was a study done that showed that 60% of town taxes were from non-residents. She said she is reviewing that to see if the % changed.

Julian Czarny said he is glad to hear discussion about the ambulance write offs. He is glad the policy is being addressed.

Julian said in reference to money being donated to town that true generosity expects no return. He said he doesn't expect Casella to ever attain that.

There was discussion about money given for police vests and targets for shooting. Chairman Blanchard assured Julian that all monies have been accepted publicly and accordingly.

Alan Jackson asked some questions about the valuation of land. Chairman Blanchard said the tax bill is from last year's assessor. Selectman Laleme suggested he file for an abatement if he feels it isn't valued correctly.

Dick Robie said anyone who comes to the Town Hall should have the right to speak.

At 7:32 Chairman Blanchard moved to go into non-public session for personnel. Selectman Fiorentino seconded. Carried 4-0. Chairman Blanchard did roll call with all members agreeing to go into non-public session.

The Board discussed personnel and held off on signing a new hire form until the liaison consulted with the Department Head.

At 7:53 Chairman Blanchard moved to come out of non-public session. Selectman Fiorentino seconded. Carried 4-0.

The Board determined there will not be a meeting next week.

At 7:55 Chairman Blanchard moved to adjourn. Selectman Glavac seconded.

Respectfully submitted,

April Hibberd

Administrative Assistant