

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

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

Chairman Culver opened the meeting at 6:33pm.

Cliff Crosby came before the Board. He said he is not representing Casella or the Select Board. He also said people are wishing he not stir things up including Casella and this Board. Mr. Crosby said the last time he went around talking to residents he wanted to stop the fight with Casella but this time it is because the tax rate is high. He said the surrounding towns have lower tax rates. He said in Berlin a lot of people left when they lost their largest taxpayer. He said our biggest taxpayer will be leaving in approximately 5 years and that he knows a lot of people still do not want to negotiate with Casella. Mr. Crosby said people are having trouble paying their taxes and he thinks Mr. Casella could be the solution to that. He said he went to 80 houses on Cherry Valley Road with a petition and he got 49 yes, 1 no, and 30 he didn't get to talk with. On Brook Road he went to 60 places and got 34 yes, 3 no, and 3 abstain. He didn't see 20 on Brook Road. Mr. Crosby said electricity could be generated from methane and that it needs to burn off. He thinks that could bring businesses here and said when Casella closes we will lose a million dollars. He asked the Board if they wished to meet with Mr. Casella and when they would like to do that. Chairman Culver said the Board has not discussed this at all and has not stated an opinion on it yet. Selectman Laleme said the Board made a commitment to the Town to close the landfill and does not want to see the Board initiate to do anything different. She said they will have to talk about what to do in 5 years when the landfill does close. She also said Mr. Crosby is free to do what he wants. Chairman Culver said he agrees that we need to figure out what to do in 5 years and also said he doesn't want to disturb the agreement. Selectman Glavac agrees that the agreement should be left as is and also agrees with the concern with the loss of revenue but that we should not start a conversation with Casella. Selectman Blanchard said if Mr. Casella wants to talk with the Board then let him come to us. Cheryl Jensen said Mr. Crosby is stirring things up and said in 2011 Mr. Crosby wrote a letter to the editor because of the landfill and why people are not moving to town not because of high taxes. She said the Board should honor the agreement. Mrs. Jensen asked if Mr. Crosby owns property in Bethlehem and he told her no that he rents and she asked what is he getting out of doing this and he said he is trying to do what is best for the Town. Jeanne Robillard asked about the numbers Mr. Crosby was talking about at last week's meeting and said the Board could be held accountable for those numbers. Chairman Culver said the Board didn't put out or stand behind those numbers. Len Reed asked that the minutes reflect that the activities of Mr. Crosby are those of a citizen and not reflective of the Board. Selectman Laleme said the Board already said that they would not meet with Mr. Casella, we haven't verified numbers, and we can't stop citizens from doing what they want. She said the Board cannot interfere with that.

Selectman Blanchard said to look at the handouts that Mr. Crosby is handing out because it does not indicate that the Board is asking him to do this.

Chris McGrath came before the Board to discuss an ambulance bill. He said he doesn't have a problem paying it if that is what the Board decides. He explained that in July a car fell on his wife's car and the police, fire, and ambulance responded. The ambulance staff was told they could leave and they signed off saying they didn't need service. He asked at that time if there would be a bill so he could tell his car insurance company but he was told by two ambulance personnel that he would not be charged. Mr. McGrath also said his wife asked the Fire Chief about the bill and was told to bring it to the Board and that he agrees there shouldn't be a charge. Chairman Culver said the ambulance policy was last updated in 2013 and states that non transports get charged. Mr. McGrath said in the 911 call it was stated that no ambulance was needed. Chairman Culver said the ambulance goes out on accident calls. The Board will look into this.

BUDGETS:

Assessing: The Board reviewed the assessing budget and discussed how it is going down due to Nicole taking on more assessing duties.

Executive: The Board discussed the executive budget and discussed the increase in unemployment (39%) which is mostly due to the Country Club dept. The unemployment along with Property & Liability and Workers' Comp will be moved to its own section and taken out of everyone's budget. Chairman Culver said everyone needs to realize they cannot raise their budget because that was taken out. Selectman Laleme asked if money was included for the cost of the website. This will be added to the budget. Selectman Blanchard said he talked with Littleton's Chamber of Commerce about joining with them and he will be talking with them more about it but suggested we combine the website at the same time. Selectman Glavac said the Town needs the website whether they combine the Chamber's or not. Selectman Laleme said there is no fat in this budget and we have 24 hour police coverage, plowed roads, Full-time Fire Chief, etc. and we need to budget for it if that is what people want. She also said we are one part of 5 that set the tax rate, 2 schools, us, county, and the state. Selectman Laleme said the Town Building has been painted etc and how we have to do things to attract people to come. Chris McGrath suggested the Profile School Technology students design the website. Chris Jensen said \$1200.00 for website is money well spent. Selectman Blanchard said we can't avoid having a budget increase any longer and said we need to determine the real need and how to best serve the town. Selectman Glavac asked what 10% cut would look like and was told salaries.

Other General Govt: The Board discussed this budget which is for the wood assessor and discussed how it is hard to determine how much will be needed. The amount proposed went down \$200.00.

Recreation: Rhienna Miscio came before the Board to discuss her budget. She showed the Board two awards her dept. won; website award and Fab Four Photo award. Mrs. Miscio said she is proposing an \$11,742.00 reduction in her general fund budget. She said the majority of the cuts are from the pool expenses. Her revolving fund budget has an increase of \$75.00. Chairman Culver said her revenue is higher than what she is budgeting for next year and said she should put more expenses in the revolving budget. Selectman Laleme said the revenue will be going down because some kids are moving. Selectman Glavac suggested putting the pool salaries in the revolving budget. Mrs. Miscio said she wants to keep the pool salaries where it is but would like to move the summer salaries to the revolving fund eventually. Selectman Glavac suggested she look at the revenue side of it. Selectman Laleme said she will probably have to pay more for lifeguard salaries next year. Selectman Glavac said \$5000.00 was cut out of pool maintenance and is concerned with that because he wants the pool to be open when school is out. He asked if there is enough money in the budget to plan for that. Selectman Glavac said to use all resources available to get the pool open. Selectman Laleme said this year it was delayed because of the epoxy and we had no control over that. Mrs. Miscio said if we leave the pool committee out of it she would have to hire someone so she can manage them and she doesn't know what condition the pool will be in after the winter. Chairman Culver asked if the money from the committee is gone and was told no there is still money there. Chairman Culver said the pool average was 15.77 people per day and averaged \$1,620.73 a year per kid. Mrs. Miscio said the summer recreation kids also used the pool. There was discussion about the summer program and whether or not there was a wait list. Mrs. Miscio said she had a good response but did not have a wait list. Selectman Glavac asked about the week when school gets out that rec isn't open and the last two weeks before school starts and running the program from the Town Hall. Mrs. Miscio said the week after school gets out she has a 4 day training program for the staff and she said the 2 weeks after Copper Cannon has a program for area kids. Selectman Glavac asked Mrs. Miscio if she has any suggestions on raising the revenue. Chairman Culver asked if water would be left in the pool for the winter this year and Mrs. Miscio said yes they are trying that but said it leaked last year. Selectman Laleme said the lifeguards which are kids will need to be trained before the pool opens and they can't do it when they are in school.

The Board discussed the problems we have been having with the furnace and said we have spent over 3,000.00 so far in repairs.

The Board discussed the flag pole being painted and said it would be done when the fire dept. hangs the lights on the tree.

It was discussed that the fuel line in the GGB budget should be increased.

The Board discussed the Aries contract to monitor and test the old Prospect St. dump. Chairman Culver moved to sign the contract. Selectman Laleme seconded. Chairman Culver signed the contract. Carried 4-0.

The Board discussed the Littleton/Bethlehem boundary line issue on Railroad Street. Littleton had Steve Boulanger do some research and asked if Bethlehem would split the \$800.00 bill. Selectman Blanchard said we had talked about surveying the property. The Board asked for clarification of whether the bill is for just researching or research and surveying. April will ask for that to be clarified.

The Board discussed the minutes from 10/13/15. Selectman Blanchard moved to approve the minutes as written. Selectman Glavac seconded. Carried 4-0.

The Board discussed the Visitor Center budget and how it will be going over. Selectman Blanchard moved to move the money received from Victor Hoffman for the visitor center to offset the visitor center budget. Chairman Culver seconded. Carried 4-0.

The Board discussed a request for an extension on a closing of a property that was sold by auction. They are requesting it be extended until 11/16/15. Chairman Culver moved to grant the extension. Selectman Blanchard seconded. Carried 4-0.

At 8:30 Chairman Culver moved to go into non-public session per 91 A:3 II for matters of reputation (c) and personnel (a). Selectman Blanchard seconded. Chairman Culver did roll call with all members agreeing to go into non-public session.

The Board discussed an eviction on tax deeded property. Chairman Culver moved to delay the eviction until November 14th. Selectman Blanchard seconded. Carried 4-0.

Chairman Culver moved that the groundskeeper position begins May 1st & ends Sept. 30th. Selectman Glavac seconded. Carried 4-0.

The Board discussed a tax deeding issue. Selectman Blanchard moved to post no trespassing signs on the property. Chairman Culver seconded. Carried 4-0.

At 9:45 Chairman Culver moved to come out of non-public session. Selectman Glavac seconded. Chairman Culver did roll call with all members agreeing to come out of non-public session.

At 9:45 Selectman Glavac moved to adjourn. Selectman Blanchard seconded. Carried 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,
April Hibberd
Administrative Assistant