

Bethlehem Board of Selectmen
Meeting Minutes
Bethlehem Selectmen Office
October 26, 2015

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

Chairman Culver opened the meeting at 6:32pm.

Geoff Sewake and Andre Garron from UNH Cooperative Extension came before the Board to discuss economic development. They did a PowerPoint presentation with information they obtained from the Town's Master Plan survey and headwaters data. Selectman Glavac asked how the Town can entice businesses into the area, tax incentives etc. Mr. Garron went over the different options the Town has including Economic Revitalization Zone (ERZ) where businesses can deduct on business tax and profit tax if they are in this zone. Another option is a 79E where the assessment would be frozen and they wouldn't be taxed on improvements for up to 5 years. Mr. Garron also talked about a Tax Increment Finance District (TIF) where you could designate an area. He said another option is a development review process where the Master Plan would be looked at and areas that we want to grow we could make rules in zoning so it can make the planning process easier for businesses. He suggested forming an economic development committee.

Chairman Culver said at the last meeting the tax rate since the settlement agreement was discussed and wanted to explain where the money has been spent. He said the library budget has gone from \$66,000 to 102,000.00, the pool has cost \$100,000 over 2 years, dispatch has gone from 62,800.00 to 83,000, Maplehurst was \$40,000, Prospect St Bridge was redone, and the revaluation was 108,000. Cheryl Jensen asked if the revenues were better now because of properties being deeded and auctioned. She was told yes. Selectman Glavac said it would take 20 more Balances paying \$12,000/year in taxes to lower the tax rate by \$1.00.

BUDGETS:

POLICE: Chief Ho-Sing-Loy came before the Board to discuss the Police budget and said it is down \$1,000.00 from last year. Selectman Staples asked if he budgeted a whole years salary for the officer that is on military leave and was told no, less than a half year was budgeted for that officer. Selectman Blanchard asked the Chief if we still need the Impala and the Chief said a new cruiser will need to be purchased next year. He said there isn't any money in the Capital Reserve except approx. \$1,000.00. He also said the Impala isn't totally outfitted but it is used as a back-up when other cruisers have issues and used for officers to drive to trainings and court. The Chief said 100 miles is put on the cruisers for every shift and because of all the miles need 4 cruisers to rotate. Selectman Glavac asked the Chief how a 10% budget cut would impact his department and was told service would be diminished. Selectman Staples asked if there were raises for the officers built into the budget and was told yes.

HIGHWAY: Brett Jackson came before the Board to discuss the highway budget. He said his salary line is increased because they are hiring another full-time person. He said he wants to put the 98 Freightliner out to bid after they strip it out. He said he also wants to put the Crown Vic out to bid. He explained that he lowered asphalt to take the sting out of hiring the new person. Mr. Jackson did say the price of asphalt dropped \$2.00 a ton this year. He said his 5 year average for his budget is \$677,000 but he is proposing \$669,000 for this coming year. He said the budget is tight but that is the way it should be. Selectman Glavac asked if he could do a good job with the amount of blacktop he has budgeted and was told he could use more. Selectman Staples asked if he budgeted enough to get through a rough winter and was told yes he raised the sand back up. He said it is big money for trucks and thinks the Town should have a Capital Reserve for any needed equipment or vehicle for any department. Selectman Glavac asked how the new position will help and was told they had to skip some roads this year on roadside mowing and trimming because they didn't have enough manpower to get to them. He also said his part-time employee will not be back. Selectman Glavac asked what a 10% cut would look like and Mr. Jackson said trimming wouldn't get done, would skimp on salt and hot top and may have less plowing. He said he would be doing a Warrant Article to put money in the Capital Reserve for a truck.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT BUILDING (AND CEMETERY): The Board discussed the GGB budget and discussed the need to increase the fuel line. There was also discussion about the expense of all the repairs to the furnace in the past year. The Board reviewed quotes for snow shoveling the two entryways, cleaning the Town Building on a weekly basis, and rug cleaning service for the runners. April will find out if there needs to be a contract for the rugs and if the shoveling can be on a call when we need them basis. There was also discussion about the cleaning service including the police department or not so April will check on that.

Chairman Culver moved to pay ½ of the \$800.00 fee for the research on the Railroad Street boundary line issue and take it out of GGB Maint. Selectman Blanchard seconded. Selectman Glavac said he would like to hear from the residents before they make a decision on the boundary line issue. Carried 3-1 (Selectman Glavac opposed).

The minutes from 10/19/15 were tabled.

Selectman Blanchard said Littleton Chamber Board wants to bring on new executive director and very interested in talking with us and Franconia about joining Littleton's Chamber.

Chairman Culver signed the legal bill.

Selectman Staples said she talked with Fire Chief Anderson about his overhead doors being broken. She said there was a power surge from an accident down the road and thinks it happened from that. The overhead door company said if they can't be fixed they would have to be replaced which would cost approx. \$2000.00. The Board agreed this would have to be done.

Chairman Culver read an invitation to the ribbon cutting for the Habitat House on Sat. from 10 to 11:30.

Julian Czarny asked if insurance would cover the overhead doors and was told they would look into that.

It was discussed that the Supervisors of the Checklist need 2 laptops. Chairman Culver will talk with Mary Jackson about it.

At 8:45 Chairman Culver moved to go into non-public session per RSA 91-A II for matters of reputation and personnel. Selectman Blanchard seconded. Chairman Culver did roll call with all members agreeing to go into non-public session.

The Board discussed personnel. The Board approved a highway new hire. Selectman Blanchard moved to waive the non holiday pay for probationary period for the new highway employee. Selectman Glavac seconded. Carried 4-0.

The Board discussed having a conference call next week with attorney about deeded property.

The Board discussed an ambulance bill. Chairman Culver moved to write off the ambulance bills. Selectman Blanchard seconded. Carried 4-0.

At 10:00 Chairman Culver moved to come out of non-public session. Selectman Blanchard seconded. Chairman Culver did roll call with all members agreeing to come out of non-public session.

At 10:00 Chairman Culver moved to adjourn. Selectman Staples seconded. Carried 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,
April Hibberd
Administrative Assistant