

Bethlehem Board of Selectmen
Meeting Minutes
Bethlehem Selectmen Office
November 9, 2015

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

Chairman Culver opened the meeting at 6:08 pm.

Don Lavoie, Trustee of the Trust Fund, came before the Board to discuss the possibility of hiring an investment company. He also mentioned the fund for monitoring the old Prospect Street Dump and said the Board may want to consider budgeting for part of the expense of that where it is no longer earning enough interest to cover the yearly costs. Jan Kotok and Alan Jackson (Trustee's of the Trust Fund) arrived to be a part of the discussion about managing the trustee accounts. Mr. Lavoie said they had a meeting with Mackensen & Company last week and said he will not be running again for Trustee of the Trust Fund. He said the accounts have grown and it is a lot of work. He said the accounts used to be managed by Cutwater but it is now a new company and they have changed the names on some of the funds and a lot of the work is being done online. He questioned the security of that and also pointed out that Ms. Kotok and Mr. Jackson do not have internet access at their homes. Mr. Lavoie said Mackensen & Company manages many towns' funds. He said the charge per year for 1 million is \$5,000.00. He explained the Town has to pay the fees or vote to allow the fees to be paid from the funds. Mackensen has agreed to waive the fees until town meeting vote. Mr. Lavoie said the Town received notice that Mackensen is getting fined and said he spoke with them about that and they admitted to the violation and doing corrective active plan to address it. He said it was basically an advertising error and the owner is now retired. Selectman Staples asked if they have done research on different options and is this who they are recommending. Mr. Lavoie said no they haven't done an RFP or research. He said they can do that but time is ticking. It was noted that Citizens bank offered to do this at one time. Mr. Lavoie said the fee from Mackensen is low and said it would be hard to find another company with the fee that low. He also said he talked with Franconia and Sugar Hill who use Mackensen and they are very happy. He said the decision is up to the Trustee's but he values input of the Board and the public. There was discussion about how the \$5000.00 would have to be paid by the Town, Village, and 2 Schools and would have to pay based on % of money that each has invested. There was discussion on whether or not there would have to be a warrant article from each division or if the Town could do a Warrant Article and bill the others. Frank Claffey said we can't spend Town money until the other groups commit to paying their share. Mr. Claffey also pointed out that the library also has funds and would need to pay their portion. He said the Town should contact Terry Knowles as it was suggested in the email about the fine for Mackensen. Mr. Claffey also asked about putting it out to bid. Alan Jackson pointed out that the trustees now do business at Mr. Lavoie's place of work and that will not be an option when Mr. Lavoie is no longer a Trustee. He said they would need space at the Town Building.

Harold Friedman came before the Board to discuss digging another plot in the Bethlehem Hebrew section of the cemetery. He said they have 2 pre-dug lots now in one area but there are some objections because of conservative beliefs and would like one more hole dug and covered. He said Bethlehem Hebrew paid for the last two and will pay the expense for this one so there will be no cost to the Town. Mr. Friedman said there are 90 plots and each plot has 2 graves. He said 10 graves are for conservatives and the rest are for others. The Board asked Brett Jackson if he had input on this and said he didn't but the cemetery committee may. Clare Brown said the cemetery committee doesn't see an issue with it. Selectman Blanchard moved to have the Highway Department dig a hole on lot #10, in the conservative area and if mishap get filled and open another if necessary. Selectman Staples seconded. Carried 4-0.

The Cemetery Committee discussed their new rate that was increased by \$100.00 for each option of one lot, two lots, and four. Mrs. Brown said they have increased the rates but they are still on the low end but said they don't want to rapidly increase. Mrs. Brown pointed out that the brochures now have the Hebrew Community in it.

The Board discussed the Quiet Title action for Map 415 Lot 174 and Map 415 Lot 019. Chairman Culver moved to instruct town counsel to file a Quiet Title on Map 415 Lot 174 and Map 415 Lot 019. Selectman Blanchard seconded. Carried 4-0.

Jack Anderson came before the Board to discuss the Fire, Ambulance and Emergency Management budgets. He recommended lowering the Emergency Management budget in half to \$500.00 and explained that is only there in case of emergencies. It was also noted that we have to have it in the budget in order to apply for FEMA grants.

Chief Anderson reviewed the fire budget with the Board. He said he put in a raise for himself because he hasn't received a raise since he started and lowered the salary line for the fire guys because he is down firefighters right now. He said he budgeted for station maintenance even though it used to be covered in GGB. He said he needs helmets and other equipment but he will use the Capital Reserve Fund for those. There was discussion about how grant revenue cannot offset the expenditures. He said that will just discourage department heads from asking for grants. Julian Czarny said the people that show up for the meetings know what is going on and maybe people watch channel 2 and said people can stay in the dark if they don't go to the meetings. Chief Anderson said if there was a 10% cut he would take out his raise and have 1 training/meeting a month versus 2. He said he doesn't like what is going on right now with the budget having to get permission for any spending. Chairman Culver said nobody has been told no but it needs to be watched. Selectman Blanchard said the Board has the accountability to the Town and the taxpayers expect the Board to do that. He said it may be frustrating but the Board needs to do it. Chief Anderson said he has never gone over his budget. Chairman Culver said it is not hard to make phone call to liaison about spending. Selectman Staples said the Board is looking at the whole budget where the Department Head is just looking at their own budget.

Chief Anderson discussed the ambulance budget with the Board. It was said that the ambulance revenues were over \$40,000.00 so far this year. Chief Anderson said he is talking with a couple of companies about refurbishing the current ambulance. He said it would be

approximately \$175,000.00 for a new ambulance and between \$95,000.00 and \$100,000.00 to rehab it. He said there is approx. \$70,000.00 in the Capital Reserve Fund so will do a Warrant Article for \$25,000.00 to \$30,000.00.

Selectman Glavac said the municipal tax rate is comparable to other towns so it is not what is driving the high tax rate. He said the school portion is \$19.32 which is 3 times the town rate.

Chief Anderson said he obtained a quote to subcontract our ambulance service out and it would cost \$17.50 per person for the population which is approximately 2600. Chief Anderson said the revenue from "refusal for care" charges was approx. \$1,800.00. Chief Anderson doesn't think the Town should charge for refusal for care situations. Mr. Czarny said dispatch costs have increased and said we used to have our own and would it be worth it to look at that. Chief Anderson said having our own was not ideal either and we didn't have all the required equipment.

Cheryl Jensen said they (Conservation Commission) will be getting a website and Facebook page and asked if it could be connected to the Town. She was told it could be linked.

Chairman Culver read a request from the Ammonoosuc River Advisory for a \$50.00 contribution. Selectman Glavac moved to approve the request. Selectman Staples seconded. Carried 4-0.

The Board reviewed the quotes for cleaning, shoveling, and carpet cleaning. Chairman Culver moved to have the rugs cleaned from G&K every other week in the winter and reevaluate after the winter. Selectman Staples seconded. Carried 4-0.

Selectman Staples moved to go with Martin's cleaning service for cleaning services. Selectman Glavac seconded. Carried 4-0.

Selectman Blanchard moved to award the shoveling bid to Laflamme's and to have them shovel for all storms after 8 am. Selectman Staples seconded. Carried 4-0.

The Board discussed the audit cost for the upcoming year and the cost for the consultant. There was discussion that we have had the consultant for 2 years and that was meant to be temporary. Chairman Culver moved to have the auditors prepare the financials and do the audit for 2015. Selectman Blanchard seconded. Carried 4-0.

The Board discussed the different insurance plan options and different % options. Selectman Glavac said the least favorable plan is still a very generous plan. He said he is in favor of an 80/20 split and said schools are doing that. Selectman Staples agrees that we should get to 80/20 and said she is new so she doesn't have the history but thinks having the employees bear all of that in one year is unfair. Selectman Staples moved to go with Interlocal Trust, the 87/84/82 split and the HMO 20/40 \$1000.00 plan. She said she feels that is a step in the direction that Selectman Glavac wants to get to and a good meet in the middle plan. She said it

would save the town \$10,000.00 a year. Chairman Culver said he likes the 84/84/84 option but pointed out the family plan doesn't get impacted. Selectman Blanchard said he always had 80/20 at jobs he worked at. Selectman Blanchard seconded. April Hibberd said the schools have the 80/20 but they have other benefits that are more generous than the towns and if making the comparison to the school it should be comparing the whole benefit package. She also said the employees would be paying 2% more for their plan plus higher co-pays and would have a deductible. She also stated that the % the Town pays is low compared to other municipalities in the same population group. Selectman Glavac said the town has tried to keep up with raises and closed the gap with salaries compared to other towns but said you don't see these plans in private sector. Carried 3-1 (Selectman Glavac opposed).

The Board reviewed the minutes from 10/19/15. Chairman Culver moved to approve the minutes. Selectman Glavac seconded. Carried 3-0 (Selectman Staples abstained).

The Board reviewed the minutes from 10/26/15. Selectman Blanchard moved to approve the minutes. Selectman Glavac seconded. Carried 4-0.

The Board reviewed the minutes from 11/02/15. Chairman Culver moved to approve the minutes. Selectman Staples seconded. Carried 3-0 (Selectman Blanchard abstained).

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

The Board discussed personnel.

The Board discussed tax deeded property.

At 9:49 Selectman Blanchard moved to come out of non-public session. Selectman Culver seconded. Chairman Culver did roll call with all members agreeing to come out of non-public session.

At 9:49 Selectman Blanchard moved to adjourn. Selectman Glavac seconded. Carried 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,
April Hibberd
Administrative Assistant