

Bethlehem Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes

Bethlehem Selectmen Office

December 23, 2013

Present: Chairman Blanchard, Selectman Culver, Selectman Sandy Laleme, Selectman Martin Glavac, and Selectman Mark Fiorentino.

At 6:11 Chairman Blanchard opened the meeting.

John Starr came before the Board to discuss the possibility of the Town selling Town owned property on Pleasant Street to Habitat for Humanity for \$1.00. He explained next year they will be building a house in Lancaster but they are looking for a lot to build on in 2015. Mr. Starr said they would want a 1 year option to see if they could remove the building on the lot for less than buying a lot. He said if it is not cost prohibitive then the lot would be given back to the Town. Selectman Laleme said the property is assessed for \$30,000 and the back taxes owed on the property are \$271,850.00. The Board pointed out that the Town cannot enter into an agreement that benefits a private person; it has to be a benefit to the Town. The Board also discussed how it could be a benefit for the Town if it is determined that affordable housing was a need for the Town. The Board will look into this further by asking the Town's attorney. Don Lavoie said he believes the Town can do what it wants with assets; that the Board has authority to decide that.

John Starr also discussed a quote for ADA compliance at the bathhouse with the Board. Mr. Starr said he is recommending all the showers be outside of the building and to have concrete work done in the bathhouse to make it ADA compliant. His estimate was for \$18,500.00.

Selectman Laleme said she has a quote to refinish the wood floor in the back room of the former library for \$1500.00. Selectman Laleme moved to have the floor refinished for a cost of up to \$1500.00. Chairman Blanchard seconded. Carried 5-0.

The Board discussed dates for the Budget Hearing. Chairman Blanchard moved to hold the Budget Hearing on Jan. 21st at 6PM. Selectman Laleme seconded. Carried 5-0. Chairman Blanchard moved to have the Deliberative on Feb. 3rd and 4th (if need be). Selectman Laleme seconded. Carried 5-0. It was pointed out that the special election was on Jan. 21st. Chairman Blanchard amended his motion to have the Budget Hearing on Friday January 17th at 6pm. Selectman Laleme seconded. Carried 5-0.

Selectman Laleme moved to encumber Asphalt with money remaining in the Highway budget; Brett will submit an invoice with the amount to encumber. Selectman Glavac seconded. Carried 5-0.

The Board reviewed the Investment Policy. Chairman Blanchard moved to renew the investment policy per RSA 41:9. Selectman Fiorentino seconded. Carried 5-0.

The Board discussed a quote they have to purchase a storage container. We currently pay a monthly rental fee for the container we are using. The quote for the container was \$2750.00; the container we currently have costs \$3000.00 to purchase. Selectman Laleme moved to purchase the existing container. Selectman Fiorentino seconded. Carried 5-0. Selectman Laleme and Selectman Fiorentino withdrew their motion and second. Chairman Blanchard moved to purchase existing container for up to \$3000.00. Selectman Culver seconded. Carried 5-0.

Selectman Fiorentino said he would like to discuss the police budget. He said there is a letter dated 04/12/12 that determines how the extra officer was hired. Selectman Fiorentino moved to not add additional \$27,000.00 for officer. Selectman Laleme seconded. There was discussion about whether a 7th officer was warranted or not. Selectman Fiorentino checked with Littleton and they have 9 FT officers and 4 PT officers. He said their population is approx. 6000 compared to our population of approx. 2500. Selectman Culver said Chief Ho-Sing-Loy should be invited in to talk to the Board about this before anything gets cut. Selectman Glavac said we have 6 officers currently and have adequate coverage. Selectman Culver pointed out that one of the officers does the prosecuting. Carried 3-2 (Chairman Blanchard and Selectman Culver opposed).

Selectman Culver moved to reduce the library budget to \$105,000.00 Selectman Fiorentino seconded. Selectman Laleme asked if the Board has the authority to cut the library's budget. Selectman Culver moved to amend his motion to say if NH RSA's allow Board to amend the amount. Selectman Culver said he also feels the \$30,000.00 shouldn't be included in the default budget. Carried 5-0.

The Board discussed making a Warrant Article to make Tax Collector and Town Clerk positions salary only instead of salary and fees. The amounts they discussed were \$24,877.00 for Town Clerk and \$15,400.00 for Tax Collector. Selectman Laleme moved to create a Warrant Article for Town Clerk with an annual salary of \$24,750.00 with no fees paid to the Town clerk (paid to the Town as revenue). Selectman Culver seconded. Carried 5-0. Selectman Laleme moved to create a Warrant Article to pay the Tax Collector a yearly salary of \$15,400.00 with no fees paid to the Tax Collector. Chairman Blanchard seconded. Carried 5-0. The Board discussed having language in the Warrant Article to explain that it will continue being paid as it has been if the Article is defeated.

Selectman Fiorentino said he believes the Police budget allows for the officer to continue as part-time. He said he thinks the letter says he goes back to part-time and the Board just cut the position entirely.

Selectman Glavac said he wants to put in extra money in the highway budget for asphalt. Selectman Glavac moved to increase the asphalt line up \$26,000.00. Selectman Fiorentino seconded. Selectman Culver said they just cut \$40,000.00 out of the proposed budget so the proposed would pass instead of the default. Selectman Glavac said every year Brett Jackson has come in with a level budget as he was requested to do and the roads are now suffering because of that. Selectman Culver said we just can't do the library, pool, police and roads all in one budget. Motion failed 2-3. (Chairman Blanchard & Selectmen Laleme & Culver opposed).

Cheryl Jensen asked the Board about the Conservation Easement that was part of the settlement agreement with Casella. She wanted to know if the Board is setting aside money to monitor and

manage that land. She also asked if the Board is setting aside money in legal in case the easement is violated. The Board told her they budgeted \$35,000.00 for legal for 2014. Chairman Blanchard said he will discuss with attorney.

The Board discussed the lease for the police copier machine. Selectman Culver said more is paid if leasing because of buyout. He said it is cheaper to buy it versus leasing. The Board discussed a letter to the leasing company explaining we don't want their printer and said we should also ask for the buyout price.

The Board discussed the PILOT for Society for the Protection of NH Forests which our assessor had recommended increasing. Selectman Laleme moved to continue the PILOT at the current amount and review again in 2014 to increase. Chairman Blanchard seconded. Carried 5-0.

The Board reviewed the minutes from 12/02/13. Chairman Blanchard moved to approve the minutes as written. Selectman Culver seconded. Carried 5-0.

The Board reviewed the minutes from 12/16/13. Selectman Laleme moved to approve the minutes as written. Selectman Glavac seconded. Carried 3-0. Selectman Culver and Chairman Blanchard abstained.

The Board reviewed the minutes from 12/05/13. Chairman Blanchard moved to approve the minutes as written. Selectman Culver seconded. Carried 5-0.

Selectman Laleme moved to write a Warrant Article for \$18,500.00 to bring bathhouse into ADA compliance as reasonably possible. Selectman Glavac seconded. Selectman Glavac said he wants to talk with the committee to see what they can do for the work. Carried 5-0.

The Board discussed the driveway permit for the library and questioned if it was still an issue. Chairman Blanchard will make a phone call to look into this.

Selectman Glavac announced the Town of Bethlehem was selected to receive Broadband Planning assistance.

The Board signed the corrected Omni privacy agreement.

Cheryl Jensen asked about the Mt. Cleveland property and the right to repurchase from the former owner. The Board said they were waiting for further clarification from the Town attorney.

At 8:20 Chairman Blanchard moved to go into non-public session per 91a for matters of personnel. Selectman Culver seconded. Chairman Blanchard did roll call with all members agreeing to go into non public session.

The Board discussed personnel.

Selectman Laleme moved to increase Dawn Ferringo's hourly rate of pay .50 an hour to \$13.50. Chairman Blanchard seconded. Carried 5-0.

Selectman Laleme moved to increase the Admin. Assist. salary 5%. Chairman Blanchard seconded.
Carried 5-0.

At 8:57 Chairman Blanchard moved to come out of non-public session. Selectman Laleme seconded.
Carried 5-0.

At 8:57 Chairman Blanchard moved to adjourn. Selectman Laleme seconded. Carried 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

April Hibberd

Administrative Assistant.