03/30/2020 SB Minutes

Approved 04/13/20

Bethlehem Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes

March 30, 2020
Zoom conference call meeting participants: Chairman Boisseau, Selectman Moore, Selectman Jensen, Selectman Moritz, Selectman Caplain.
Chairman Boisseau opened the meeting at 6:03 pm and explained the meeting is to give updates on Covid 19. He also said he would like to have future agendas that have bullets with topics on the Covid 19. Board all agreed. Chairman Boisseau said it would help them focus on things they want to accomplish.

Selectman Jensen said on a Facebook post someone asked about delaying tax bills or having payment plans.

Selectman Moore said she has a lot of information on that after talking to Mary Jackson. Selectman Moritz thanked Selectman Jensen for his work on mailer.

Selectman Jensen said it also came up on Facebook about people visiting Bethlehem from out of state and what can be done about it.

Jack Anderson said he participated in multiple conference calls today. He said the hospital is updating med surg plan and has been communicating with EMF units. He said they’d be able to determine how many cases in town that are known. He said it has been quite an effort to keep people home and according to the state and the hospital it will not peak for another few weeks. Chief Anderson said the need to stay with the social distancing is for at least another month. He said the quicker the mailer goes out, the better. He explained there will be pods set up for distribution to give out equipment to medical personnel. He said he has secured the downstairs fire and police offices. Chief Anderson also said the issue with basketball courts is the need to educate parents and the need to make kids realize throwing ball around could be spreading it if any of them have it. He told the Board he started making calls to the people on the at-risk list. The Board will help make calls. Volunteers haven’t been needed yet but may come to that. He said there will be arrangements with hotels in area to house people infected.

Chairman Boisseau said they need to plan and appreciates Chief Anderson for being forward thinking. He asked the Board what they want to do with closing other areas of town property to limit people on congregating.

Chief Anderson said they will have to think about Country Club but thinks it should remain open as long as they don’t congregate. Selectman Caplain agrees but said they will need to sanitize equipment and carts. It will be put on agenda for next week to discuss country club opening. There has been a lot of conversation about rec properties and whether to close them or not. Chairman Boisseau said he would hate to close them but if people are not listening and following protocol, we may want to consider closing it. Selectman Jensen thinks it should be closed. He said he doesn’t worry as much about tennis courts. Selectmen Moore and Caplain agree with Selectman Jensen. Chief Anderson said he saw some families over there – a dad and his kids and said a family being there is good, but a group of kids is not good. He thinks it should be closed.

Chairman Boisseau asked Tim Fleury about closing the BB court and possibly the tennis courts because it promotes larger groups to congregate. He said playing tennis does not promote large numbers playing close together.

Mr. Fleury agrees the bb courts should be closed. He said he has seen people there but also agrees tennis courts should remain open. There was discussion about closing the baseball field and Chairman Boisseau said they may need to revisit. Mr. Fleury said it makes sense to close off the baseball field but would be hard to do and a lot of people walk down there and bring their dogs there. Selectman Jensen said they could post the baseball field discouraging people from congregating. Selectman Jensen asked if BB courts can be locked and was told yes. The Board agreed to keep the tennis courts and baseball field open and close the basketball court. Selectman Caplain said he would like to revisit baseball field again to make sure it doesn’t become a problem.

Selectman Moore said the Visitor Center would be set to open soon so they need to revisit that eventually.

Police Chief Demoranville said he wants to know when the BB courts would be closed so he can let his officers know.

Mr. Fleury said he could do it right away. Chairman Boisseau said he could wait until tomorrow morning. Mr. Fleury said he could get signs and lock it either tonight or tomorrow morning.

Chief Anderson said they need to work on the call list and get in touch with all people on the list and said he is concerned with older people that are going to the stores.

Selectman Moore said they should create a live document – April will do that.

Chairman Boisseau said with the issue of visitors coming to town he doesn’t want to cause strife with people and doesn’t want to come across as unfriendly. Selectman Moore said she doesn’t see how we can stop it. Selectman Caplain said it is something the governor should decide. The Board discussed how they can ask and strongly suggest people coming into Bethlehem to self-quarantine but can’t mandate it. Selectman Moritz asked where we would put that info and said that should come from the state. Chairman Boisseau asked if we should put advisory out to visitors and residents if they are coming in from traveling or other areas to self-quarantine and is okay with putting it on website but doesn’t want to alienate second homeowners and wouldn’t want to put signs up etc. Board agrees they don’t want to alienate anyone but agrees with general advisement for people coming into town. Selectman Jensen said this is a big deal and understands residents that are concerned with this and said it is not unreasonable to ask people to self-quarantine. Selectman Moritz is okay with putting it on website. Citizen (Allegra Wright) of Bethlehem is concerned and need to protect. Selectman Moore agrees with what Selectman Moritz said about citing what the governor said about it. Selectman Jensen will write something up. Selectman Caplain said to add to it if they are self-quarantining the town will help bring groceries etc.

Chairman Boisseau said they will meet weekly until this is over.

Delaying of taxes:

Selectman Moore has talked with Mary Jackson about delaying the due date for taxes. The Board agreed to go into a work session for this topic. Selectman Moore said lien notices go out and people are told they have 30 days to pay back taxes or lien will go through. She said they can delay letter or can give them longer than 30 days. It was noted they are going out to people that missed first and second issue of last year’s taxes and is not because of Covid 19. The amount is $397,000 and the law requires the notice be done by August 30th. The Board discussed when delaying the liening it delays the whole process including deeding and having an auction. The Board decided to revisit this on June 1st. Selectman Jensen said they didn’t discuss delaying the tax payment process. Selectman Moritz said if they did delay it, they would have to get a TAN which would bring an expense. The Board decided to delay this conversation so Mary Jackson can be part of discussion and find out if it is legal or not.

Selectman Moore read from a legal advice that says, ‘shall mail all tax bills by June 15th and mandatory enforcement’. Board does not have legal authority to change that. Selectman Jensen asked if people can people make payments and Selectman Moore said yes. Chairman Boisseau said even though we can’t do anything about it, it is nice that it is addressing peoples concerns.
Other

Selectman Moritz said she sent email earlier on communication under these circumstances and emailing more often. She said they need to come up with protocol to stay within the law. She said Board members should email chairman Boisseau and April for items for agenda. She said she is having a hard time keeping emails organized and makes it hard to find an older email. Chairman Boisseau said he thinks it is great how communicative the Board is and understands why the rule is now lax due to need to communicate. He said trying to maintain staying within the 24-hour posting notice time if possible. Selectman Moritz said emails are public per 91A but thinks it should be discussed at meeting. Selectman Moore agrees. Selectman Jensen said they are dealing with things that need to be decided quickly and said the mailer is an example. Selectman Moritz said that can be emailed and bcc the board so each can respond individually if they are ok with it. She also said there are conversations going on that should be done in public instead of going around in emails. Selectman Caplain said there are emails that could be done in a meeting and even could schedule a quick meeting via zoom. Chairman Boisseau said if it is urgent and can’t wait until Monday, they can try to schedule a conference call. Selectman Moritz said things come up often where they have to meet quicker and said April has always been the one that sifts through the issues and can let the board know if something needs to be addressed quickly. Chairman Boisseau said if something comes up that needs to be addressed soon then April and Chairman Boisseau will determine if there needs to be a quicker meeting. Selectman Caplain agrees with that. Selectman Jensen thinks it will slow down the process but will do it. Selectman Moritz said she is concerned they are pushing the envelope and it would slow it down but in order to have residents participate and chime into the meeting they need to do it that way. Selectman Jensen said we can call a meeting but due to no notice there will not be any participants. Chairman Boisseau said the pandemic is going to ramp up so thinks they should try to go with best practices again. Can revisit if it doesn’t work out.

Minutes – 03/16/20, 03/20/20 & 03/23/20

Selectman Moore moved to accept all minutes. Selectman Caplain seconded. Carried 5-0.
At 7:28 Chairman Boisseau moved to go into non-public per RSA 91A 3 II for matters of personnel. Selectman Caplain seconded. Roll call – all.

Selectman Moritz moved to approve police dept. increases based on performance. Selectman Moore seconded. Carried 5-0. In budget.

Selectman Moritz moved to approve Dave Wiley’s increase. Selectman Caplain seconded.

Carried 5-0.

Selectman Moritz moved to approve DB and NM raise. Selectman Moore seconded. Carried 5-0.
At 7:45 Chairman Boisseau moved to adjourn. Selectman Caplain seconded. Carried 5-0.
Respectfully submitted,

April Hibberd

Administrative Assistant