04/27/2020 SB Minutes

Bethlehem Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes

April 27, 2020
Via Zoom – Chairman Boisseau, Selectman Moore, Selectman Moritz, Selectman Caplain, Selectman Jensen.

Meeting opened at 6:03. Chairman Boisseau reminded people to mute their microphones and said he will open it up to public input after each agenda item.

State Representative Erin Hennessey updated the Board and wanted to know if the Board has any questions. She is one of 8 members developing a plan to spend the 1.2 billion from the federal govt. She said they are h earing from many different agencies – restaurants, auto dealerships, non-profits, etc on how the pandemic is affecting people. Towns are anticipating tax delinquencies and having to have TAN’s longer with an expense due to interest. Chairman Boisseau said the board will be discussing anticipated tax shortfalls next week and asked how we can help out our town and surrounding communities with this funding. Ms. Hennessey said they are still determining that, but they cannot be used for revenue shortfall. She thinks they can use it for interest for TAN though because that is an expense. She said they are hoping to have recommendations next week. Selectman Caplain said we would like to help small businesses and with tourist season coming they are struggling and worried. Ms. Hennessey asked if we have polled the businesses about if they would open when they can. Selectman Caplain said the ones he has talked with would like to open as soon as they can but in a safe way. Selectman Moritz asked if the funds would be on a first come basis. Ms. Hennessy said she is not sure and said they are just an advisory board to the governor. She said some funds have already been allocated to health industries. Jack Anderson said a lot of our businesses are hotels and cabins and this time is prime time for taking reservations, but they can’t do that until they know when the stay at home ban is lifted. Ms. Hennessey said they heard from many hotels in the state about that and they all are concerned about that. A subcommittee is working on that. Selectman Jensen asked about SBA – available for businesses at low %. Ms. Hennessey said it would be nice to see some put into CDFA for low or no interest loans. Selectman Moore said there is a website for the “gofer”. Yes – Ms. Hennessey. Selectman Moritz asked if rooms and meals would be higher to towns or refund to businesses, forecast to what we will be given. Ms. Hennessey said there was discussion about businesses who have paid rooms and meals tax. Ms. Hennessey encouraged people to call or email her.

Profile Technologies – phone assessment. Selectman Moore said she has spoken with them several times about this, but they have been swamped with Covid-19 related issues but have now been able to write up a quote. Selectman Moore said it does say they would seek bids, but we already have bids. Selectman Caplain said he thinks the bid is just for the wiring. He also said he thinks part of what they were determining is if we need to rewire. Chairman Boisseau asked the Board what the next best steps are for moving forward. Selectman Moore said she thought they were going to hire them because none of the board members have the expertise to know what to do. They will have their recommendation within 30 days after they get the go ahead. Board all agreed to go forward. Selectman Moore said she will confirm if we need to rewire.

Food Pantry – Selectman Moore said we are not getting as many out of towners so fewer numbers but are feeding locals. She said we are getting sizable donations and we get USDA food and use money to supplement food pantry items. Someone recommended getting gift certificates for fire and police at local stores and supporting our local businesses that are doing takeout need help. Chairman Boisseau said getting gift certificates for local businesses will help our local businesses. Selectman Jensen said we should determine a few places to recommend people to donate to. There was discussion about how we will not be handling the money we will just direct people to other ways they can help in other ways due to food pantry not needing it. Chief Anderson suggested people donating through food pantry to get money to needy families. Selectman Jensen said we could set up a separate fund for needy families. Chief Anderson said we don’t have a 501c3. Selectman Moritz said we can’t do that through the town without a warrant. She said she could talk with Wren about setting up a separate fund for needy families.

Covid-19 updates – Selectman Jensen 75% reimbursement for emergency measures and also to track volunteer time because that can offset the 25%. Chief Anderson said he has Nicole tracking payroll costs. Chief Anderson said we ought to plan ahead a bit. He said we only have 1 known case in town and said we need to keep up the social distancing. He said people are going to start worrying as things start opening up and discussed the country club and how they are discussing members only and other means to keep people safe. The Chief said we need to start planning for a second wave of this also. He said plans are being made for that and mass inoculation sites. He said that will be handled by MACE and said they need to keep encouraging the safety measures.

Public Input

Chris McGrath said he noticed the golf course guys working hard but how is it being funded if it isn’t open. He doesn’t want tax dollars being used. Selectman Caplain said they have been receiving membership funds. Mr. McGrath also asked about the recreation program and said his family needs to plan for summer. Chairman Boisseau said there may be more information after May 4th from Governor. Selectman Moritz said it is premature to make decisions now until governor makes decision on stay at home order. She says they should have all information before making decision. Mr. McGrath said he is concerned with paying library and rec employees. Allegra Wright said she would like to see more people wearing masks. She said businesses should be required to wear masks. Chief Anderson said Cedarcroft is set in motion to demolish it. He said there is a new piece of paperwork required by the state. The owner has submitted the paperwork and a lead test has to be done by the landfill which has been done but waiting on results. He said he is hoping it is good to go as soon as that is done. Rita Farrell asked if town engineer does surveys. Selectman Moritz said we use Aries Engineering and used Gardner Kellogg for surveying. Rita Farrell asked if the building inspector is a town employee and was told yes. Mrs. Farrell asked if the building inspector calls and has a survey done and was told no. She also asked how setbacks are determined and was told by ordinance and building inspector checks.

Other – Air BNB’s – Selectman Caplain said there are questions about how short-term rentals are being handled. Elm Street, Cabins across from Dollar General etc. He said there were many cars with out of state plates and wondered if they are quarantining for the recommended 14 days. Selectman Caplain said we need to be smart now to prevent a second wave. Selectman Moritz said she reached out to NHMA to see if we can charge a fine, but we can’t. She said it is a police matter. She said there was a situation and the police were called and waited until the people left. Chief Anderson said we could create an ordinance for the air BNB’s and said they are not thinking of us. Selectman Moritz said they should send a letter to each lodging establishment reminding them of the rules and that it is a police matter if they don’t follow the rules. Selectman Caplain said he likes Selectman Moritz idea of a letter and will draft a letter and circulate it. Allegra Wright has someone on her street that comes up on the weekends and are out and about in the community and asked what can be done about that. Selectman Moritz said if it is the homeowner there isn’t anything they can do because the governors 14-day quarantine is a recommendation not an order. Selectman Moore said the police could be called to determine if it is a renter or not. Chairman Boisseau asked how they can get a list of short-term rentals. Selectman Moritz said she can go online to create a list.

Frank Claffey told the Board there are documents that need to be signed in the town office. One is for $100,000 to be drawn on Friday to pay the schools. He said the bank is requesting the Board (all 5) sign authorizing the TAN and draw. He also suggested the board give authority to one board member to sign. He said the other document is for 1 million dollars. All the Board members said they can sign the agreement. Mr. Claffey said there may be issues going forward with all board members signing for draws. The Board agreed to require a majority (3) to sign for draws. Selectman Moritz moved to require a quorum for additional fund requests (draws). Selectman Jensen seconded. Roll – all – motion carried.

Selectman Moritz moved to have a million dollar note from Woodsville bank Selectman Jensen seconded. Roll all – Motion Carried.

Selectman Moritz moved to approve a $100,000 advancement for Friday. Chairman Boisseau seconded. Roll – all – motion carried.

Selectman Jensen asked if it would be worth looking into doing business with Mascoma Bank because they are the bank in town. Mr. Claffey said it has been looked into and the % is higher but said he can look at it again.

Selectman Caplain moved to approve the minutes from 04/20/20. Selectman Moore seconded. Roll – all – motion carried.

Selectman Moritz moved to approve the minutes from 04/13/20. Selectman Moore seconded. Roll – all – motion Carried.

Selectman Moritz moved to approve the minutes from 04/06/20. Selectman Moore seconded. Roll – all – motion carried.

At 7:28 Chairman Boisseau moved to go into non-public session per RSA 91A:3 II for matters of personnel and reputation. Selectman Moritz seconded. Roll – all – motion carried.

The Board discussed an enforcement issue.

At 7:39 Chairman Boisseau moved to adjourn. Selectman Moore seconded. Roll – all – motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

April Hibberd

Administrative Assistant