05/04/2020 SB Minutes

Bethlehem Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes

May 4, 2020
Via Zoom – Chairman Boisseau, Selectman Moore, Selectman Moritz, Selectman Caplain, Selectman Jensen.

Meeting opened at 6:00. Chairman Boisseau reminded people to mute their microphones and said he will open it up to public input after each agenda item.

Sullivan Creative update on Marketing plan. Selectman Caplain said we would like to do this as a work session and will open it up at another meeting. Pam Sullivan said they started in Feb. and then Covid changed the way they were planning on handling it. She said they were able to get good information though. She explained the website (www.discoverbethlehemnh.com) has good information, and everything will be on there. She said they did focus groups and online surveys. Ellen said the online survey asked specific questions and allowed for their own answers. Physical assets were important to people and dominant intangible objects. Local nature, elevation, Ammonoosuc river, route 302 & route 3. Hiking, biking, walking and snowmobile trails. The Rocks, Mt. Washington, Bretton Woods, Colonial, 1st Friday, gazebo concerts, village area. Everyday amenities – village store, Irving. Excellent school system, police, fire, and library. There is hunting, a brew pub for dinner and can “log off”. There is a respect for history but also progressive, individual personalities but shared values, different ages, locals support locals and visitors appreciate locals. Comes across that Bethlehem appreciates visitors. What colors represent Bethlehem? Blue – many shades of it. Greens – all shades. Alpenglow – oranges and purples. White – winter snow. Autumn colors. Katelyn – worked on tagline. Friendly, scenic, quaint, outdoorsy, eclectic. The taglines the focus groups came up with are Find Your Peak Experience, Elevate Your Life, Just Be|Bethlehem, NH, All Paths Lead Here, We Make the Mountains Memorable, Great Views. Even Better People, North of the Notches, In the Heart of it All, Your Hometown Awaits, A Grand Place. Ms. Sullivan said their choice is Just Be | Bethlehem, NH and will be working on a logo and a style guide. They will be developing another survey to test the logo (just be) and hope to get more businesses.

Selectman Caplain said there were a lot of good taglines so would like to absorb them for a while. Selectman Jensen asked about attracting tourist versus young people. Ms. Sullivan said they need to pick a tagline so they can develop a logo. Chairman Boisseau asked the timeline for selecting a tagline. Ms. Sullivan told him ASAP – within a week. Selectman Moore said they did a great job, but she doesn’t care for just be. She said she likes the path one and elevate your life ones better. Ms. Sullivan said they eliminate the ones people don’t like then pick the top 3 or 4 and maybe do a survey with the top 3 or 4. Selectman Caplain said they will all have their own preference but likes the idea of sitting on it for a week and picking their top 3 or 4. It will be put on the agenda for next week. Ms. Sullivan asked the board to give her their top 4 so she can do another survey. The Board will rank them 1-9.

Tax Incentive with Covid – should the board create tax incentive to have people pay them on time or create a buffer for them with no penalty. They pushed it back to see what is happening on state level. Selectman Moore said the tax incentive is off the table. She said it doesn’t work that way because the town needs a certain amount to run so it would be made up in the second billing plus you need a town vote. She also said the liening and emergency order #25 for temporary modification of interest penalty for late payment of property taxes, is not decided by the board, it is decided by the tax collector after consulting with legal counsel. Selectman Moore said Mary Jackson would like to postpone the liening process until the end of June early July and said we do not have to charge interest for late payments for a certain amount of time. Also, we could split the bill up in increments and charge based on the increments. Selectman Moritz said she is glad they can’t incentivize because they would have to decrease their budget 5% and the schools as well. She also said there should be guidelines in approving it. Selectman Moore said emergency order #25it is a blanket program, not to be individualized. There was discussion on whether there could be criteria developed on whether the interest was abated or not. The Board decided to get legal advice to clarify this. Selectman Caplain said he hopes Selectman Moritz is right that they can set criteria but doesn’t think she is. Selectman Moritz said the town still needs money to run the town. She said she hopes they can come up with a solution that works and worries it will affect the tax rate next year. The Board agreed to get the advice from Walter. April can make the call asking if we can put conditions of a hardship due to covid on waiving interest. If so, ask if he has suggestions on what the conditions would be? The Board will make decision next week after getting legal advice. Selectman Caplain said the application would be very difficult with setting the criteria. Selectman Moritz said it could make it very complicated.

Allegra Wright suggested checking with other towns with similar populations.

Rita Farrell asked if the Master Plan has ability to weigh in on marketing/branding plan and asked how the Board feels about the master plan that the citizens feel about our town. Selectman Moore said she gave Ms. Sullivan a copy of the Master Plan.

Masks – mandatory in town building? Chairman Boisseau said if we are asking others to wear masks and if it prevents spreading of the virus, we should have mandatory order that people should have to wear masks in the town building. Selectmen Moore, Jensen & Moritz agree. Selectman Caplain agrees and wants to clarify that it applies to public and town employees that come in contact with other town employees. The Board all agrees. Chairman Boisseau asked if we have masks available. There was discussion about what kind of mask would be needed. Board agreed just face covering is adequate. The Board agreed if workers are working outside or alone in an office, they do not need to wear one but coming in close vicinity with someone, in same vehicle for example they should wear one. There was discussion about repercussions of not complying. Selectman Jensen said if a customer comes to town hall without a mask they don’t get served. Selectman Caplain moved to mandate employees wear masks when coming in contact with town employees and residents coming in town building. Selectman Moore seconded. Chris McGrath is opposed to this and said he would rather see a shield put up. Mr. McGrath asked if they would be opening town hall next week. Chairman Boisseau said no this is for employees working in the office conducting town business. Rita Farrell asked if people would be provided masks. Selectman Caplain said no because they just need a covering, a cloth covering is fine. Roll call – all – motion carried.

Covid – 19 – update – golf course – Selectman Caplain said there are a lot of restrictions so need to discuss if we want to open or not. He thinks we should. He said people should not congregate, and they need to sanitize all equipment. Selectman Jensen asked if they have everything, they need to sanitize all equipment. Selectman Jensen said this wasn’t on the agenda so should wait a week. Selectman Moritz said we shouldn’t wait a week and should have another meeting. Selectman Caplain said he will be reducing overhead (staff) to compensate for less business. Selectman Moritz said they can wait until next week where Monday is the 11th so they will only lose one day. Tabled until next week.

Selectman Caplain said he wrote the letter to the short-term rental owners and sent to the other Board members and asked if they should send it out. They agreed to send it. Chairman Boisseau will sign for the Board.

Public Input

Chris McGrath asked if the tennis courts etc. are going to be open now too. Selectman Moritz said the golf course is supervised by the golf course manager, but the rec properties are not supervised and will not be making that decision now to open them.

Allegra Wright said the police had a post last week about suspicious activity. She wants more information. Selectman Moritz will inquire about that.

Minutes 04/27/20 – Selectman Caplain moved to approve. Selectman Jensen seconded. Roll – all – motion carried.

At 7:51 Chairman Boisseau moved to go into non-public per RSA 91A:3 II for matter of personnel. Selectman Jensen seconded.

Selectman Caplain discussed two rehires for the country club, Bob Gorgone and Jim Sepla. Selectman Moritz moved to approve the hires. Selectman Jensen seconded. Roll call – all – motion carried.

Prosecutor’s Agreement – #9 – prosecutors’ responsibility to come up with someone to handle it. Tabled until next week after input from Primex and possibly attorney.

Property health issue.

At 8:17 Chairman Boisseau moved to adjourn. Selectman Moritz seconded. Roll call – all – motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

April Hibberd

Administrative Assistant