Bethlehem Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes

October 5, 2020

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

Chairman Boisseau opened the meeting at 6:00 and reminded people to leave their microphones on mute.

**PUBLIC INPUT**

Cheryl Jensen **– what is the status of the reflective address markers**. Chairman Boisseau asked if she was referring to the 911 markers and she said yes. Selectman Moritz will follow up with Chief Anderson.

Mary Lou Krambeer – thanked Board members and staff. **Next election is November 3rd**. Selectman Moritz will be proposing renting a tent for the front lawn. She said Chief Anderson is supportive of this. She explained there are 2 grants being put forward for election expenses. Secretary of State requires continuity of backup plan. She said the backup plan will be at Profile School. Chairman Boisseau thanked Ms. Krambeer for all her work. Selectman Moore asked if she looked at the budget to see where the money would come from if they don’t get the grants. Selectman Jensen said Mary Jackson has been doing all that work by herself. Allegra Wright asked for an update on the sale of the golf course. Selectman Caplain said it is continuing as it is supposed to. He said it has been surveyed and will be going before the Planning Board next week.

**Should Police Arrest Records be Published from the Town** – Chairman Boisseau wanted to clarify misleading information that was published about “secret arrests” and said the discussion was not about secret arrests. He said it was about publishing police records and said currently we don’t publish arrest records just like similar surrounding towns don’t. We are not trying to hide anything as publication alluded to. The Chief does not believe it is a good idea to release information. Police officers are very community oriented and focused and want to be part of community, they are in our schools and very approachable. He said they are not trying to hide anything and are accountable to laws. Chairman Boisseau said to hear secret arrest from publication and comments about board members is offensive. He said the police budget is large, but we cover a large area and they put their lives on the line. He also said we are not pondering secret arrests and that was not our discussion. He pointed out that the information can be released with 91A, but we are choosing not to publish it. We are a small community where it can harm people’s reputation and said last week it was mentioned they don’t know what they (police) do. He said he believes the Chief would answer any questions about that. Police Chief, Alan DeMoranville said all of this information is available through the courts and nothing is being hidden. He said he doesn’t want to see someone who is innocent to be shunned and said until they are proven guilty, he doesn’t want to publish it. He is fine with the yearly statistics. Selectman Jensen asked about publishing it after a court disposition. The Chief said it is available through the court docket and includes all information. Selectman Jensen said it would be easier for the Chief to release. Chief DeMoranville asked if he is being asked to go through each case after it goes through the court and said he doesn’t have time for that. Selectman Jensen asked if the officers come back and tell him what happened. The Chief said the prosecutor comes back with that information. Selectman Moritz asked why that info is needed. Selectman Jensen said the yearly information is sketchy. Selectman Moritz said he is determining what people want info on. Selectman Jensen said other police departments who are also not providing this info are failing. Selectman Moritz said what we are receiving is fair. She also said we should know what the police are doing and feels we do. Selectman Moritz said if more info is wanted, file a 91A and also said this doesn’t make sense to her on what we will benefit from it. The budget shows what they spend on everything. She supports the Chief on this. Selectman Jensen talked about President task force – embrace a culture of transparency – post on website – arrests, stops, etc. Selectman Caplain said transparency is everything they are doing – not just arrests. They do a lot more than arrests. He also sad if the Police are going to do this, all departments (town) should be that transparent. Selectman Jensen said you can’t tell what the police are doing like all the other departments – highway, rec. town clerk. Selectman Caplain said he sees the police pull over people, patrolling around town, etc. He also pointed out they put out a warning about break-ins. Selectman Jensen said if he knew about a place being burglarized, he would be careful. The Chief said he doesn’t think it is a good idea to release information of where the break in was. He said to put out a general notice maybe. Chairman Boisseau said we have had this discussion before in the past and Chief Ho-Sing-Loy had said it can be a slippery slope if one thing is posted but something else isn’t. We hired the Chief to do a job and part of his job is not to disclose all of the information. Chairman Boisseau also said part of the job is to try to prevent crimes and they are not going to give all their cards away. We need to respect the position we hired the Chief to do. Selectman Jensen said the burglar knows where the break in happened, the neighbors should too. Selectman Jensen said the Chief said he would be more transparent then the former Chief and he isn’t. Chairman Boisseau said that isn’t true. Selectman Moritz said she went to Chief Ho-Sing-Loy after she was elected to discuss the police dept and how it runs. She asked Selectman Jensen when he went to the Chief to ask about the dept. He said he asked the Chief about releasing the info. Selectman Moritz said we don’t ask Fire Chief, Jack Anderson about fighting fires or Road Agent, Brett Jackson about roads. Selectman Moore said she doesn’t know what Jack and Brett’s departments are doing every day and said we hire professionals to do their job and supports the department heads. Chairman Boisseau said last week they discussed whether they should publish arrest records or not. Cheryl Jensen said as a taxpayer and woman it would be better to release this info at one time instead of 20 people going separately to ask. She would like to know what is happening for crime in town and thinks as a taxpayer she has a right to that. She said there are a lot of stories about rapes happening, but nobody is told. Littleton doesn’t have a problem with posting arrests. The Chief said when it comes to an active investigation no one releases information – not even Littleton. He said he can’t speak to why Littleton releases what they do but he stands by what he says about innocent until proven guilty. Peter Roy said for info to be released someone has to sit at a computer to put it on website. He said he would rather have them out patrolling. He also said people are innocent until proven guilty. He said there are systems in place for emergencies and notifying the public. Chief, Jack Anderson said it is done by Code Red. Sam Talcott said the police carry weapons and are authorized to use force so should require more transparency then other departments. He said he left last week’s meeting thinking a good compromise was releasing a list of crimes without names. The Chief said that comes down to what Peter Roy said and to go through each case to make sure it isn’t an active case, harm someone etc. He said weekly it couldn’t happen but maybe on a different time frame. Clay Morris said as a homeowner, if he were broken into would not want his address in the newspaper. He would rather see more of a police presence. He asked what the goal is. Selectman Moritz responded about the guns to Mr. Talcott and said that is a good point. She also said we have never had a complaint about a bad arrest or complaint against any of the officers. It would be handled not only with them but with the state. Mr. Talcott said he is speaking from a prevention standpoint and said that is like saying I don’t need to lock my door because it hasn’t been broken into. Erin Talcott said she would like to discuss preventative policing and possibly to have a community forum to discuss statistics and brainstorm if there are speeders in a certain area etc. Chief Anderson doesn’t have a problem with transparency but pointed out the need to be careful with putting info out there due to unintended consequences. He said when you get into spousal abuse, child abuse, drunks etc. you don’t want to put that out there. He said he supports the Chief 100%. Cheryl Jensen would like to see the Board pursue a quarterly report. Allegra Wright said she thinks the Chief is doing a great job and doesn’t want to know peoples arrest records or whose house has been broken into. She just wants to know what is going on – break-in on Meadow St for example. Could be monthly. Chairman Boisseau said he doesn’t know if info like that could be pulled from the database. Chief DeMoranville said they release info like lost dogs on FB etc. He said he has no problem releasing info more often (quarterly) but he doesn’t know how that will happen. Selectman Moritz asked if we could get that info from Grafton on a quarterly basis would that be time consuming. The Chief said he would have to call dispatch to get the report and then enter the information. Selectman Jensen said getting statistics on a monthly or quarterly basis would be a good start. The Chief said he thinks that is acceptable. He also said a successful police dept. would have 0 arrests. He said they will see what they can get together and see if it is beneficial. Mr. Morris said quarterly reports are good. He said if people want more info, they can do the research. He doesn’t want to spend his tax dollars to provide that to people. Chairman Boisseau said they will look into quarterly reporting and see if it would be a beneficial endeavor. The Chief will do some research on it.

**Ice Rink** – Tim Fleury said he looked into a portable ice rink for the basketball court. He said since he has been the Recreation Director, they have used the ice rink and has not worked well. He was looking in his pool budget to reallocate those funds to purchase a portable rink for approximately $6000 - $7000 depending on size. He explained he has storage capabilities in the shed at ballfield and everything comes with it that is needed. He said it would take about 4 weeks to receive it. Selectman Moritz asked if he could use it for future years and he said yes. The liner is $1200 and would need to be replaced every 3 – 5 years. Selectman Moritz said this seems to be so much less expensive then to fix the ice rink. Mr. Fleury said it would take more than $7000 to fix the rink. He said the skate park is doing some work and he has seen some kids there, and said it is so nice to see them there. Selectman Caplain asked if there could be any possible damage to the courts. Mr. Fleury said he doesn’t think so but will check. Chairman Boisseau thinks it is a great idea. Mr. Fleury said he also was looking at the spot in front of gazebo. Harry Newell said to check the court because he thinks it is lower on one end. Chris McGrath thinks it is a great idea. He asked if there is there money in the budget to purchase a snowblower. Mr. Fleury said there is money that could be used. Selectman Jensen thinks it is a great idea. **Selectman Caplain moved to reallocate money from pool chemical line to purchase this. Selectman Jensen seconded. Roll call – all – motion carried.**

**Derelict Properties** – Selectman Moore said RSA 147 gives health officer the right to enforce and abate public nuisances. She referred to a public health nuisance document from the health officer association. If it is something that affects more than just one person then it is a public nuisance. Selectman Moore would like to get more info from NHMA. She would like to find out difference between ordinance and this regulation. Selectman Jensen asked if she talked with Health Officer, Dave Wiley and she said not yet but he should be brought into this discussion. Selectman Moore will contact Mr. Wiley and NHMA.

**Owl Camera**– The Board discussed Profile Technologies said it will take approximately 8 weeks to get the owl. They discussed if we still want to get it or get something comparable which would be $4000.00 for something comparable versus the $999.00 for the Owl. Chairman Boisseau thinks we should still get it, going into meeting season. The Board agrees. Someone said it is available on Amazon now. Bruce asked if we could get reimbursed through Goferr grant and was told yes. Chris McGrath thanked the Board. April will check Amazon tomorrow.

Selectman Moritz said there is a **grant proposal for $5000.00 to help with election costs**. Board needs to decide if they want to go forward with that. They also need to discuss renting a tent for $500.00. The Board agreed it would be best to rent a tent. They will determine as we get closer if they need a heater. **Selectman Moritz moved to go forward with $5000.00 grant to offset election costs. Selectman Moore seconded. Roll call – all – motion carried**. **Selectman Moritz moved to rent a tent from Abbott. Selectman Moore seconded. Roll call – all motion carried.** Mary said if they do not get the grant, they will need to find money in the budget to cover the $500.00.

Selectman Moore – **backpacks** – if anyone can come up with a great idea for them (60). Looking for suggestions. Chris M. asked if they contacted NEST or Bethlehem Emergency Services.

**Fuel** – **Selectman Moritz moved to go forward with current fuel accounts. Selectman Moore seconded. Roll call – all – motion carried**. Will remove employee discount.

**Drug testing – Selectman Moritz moved to go forward with drug testing agreement that is required for CDL drivers. Selectman Moore seconded. Roll call – all – motion carried.**

**Furnace** – The Board discussed the problems with the furnace and the difficulty getting it repaired. Currently the building does not have heat and it happens every year multiple times a year – even after it has been repaired. Research will be done to find other companies to repair and to look into the possibility of the need to replace them. Discussion about the constant problems with the furnaces. Selectman Caplain will talk to energy commission and will also reach out to Alan Jackson.

**Minutes 09/28/20. Selectman Moore moved to approve the minutes. Selectman Jensen seconded. Roll call – 4 -0 Selectman Caplain abstained. Motion carried.**

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

The Board discussed personnel.

The Board discussed a property issue.

**Chairman Boisseau moved to adjourn. Selectman Jensen seconded. Roll call – all – motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

April Hibberd

Administrative Assistant