Bethlehem Board of Selectmen

 Meeting Minutes

October 19, 2020

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

**Chairman Boisseau opened the meeting at 5:30 and moved to go into non-public session per RSA 91 A:3 II for matters of personnel and legal. Selectman Moritz seconded. Roll call– all - motion carried.**

**Selectman Moore moved to hire Laurie Thompson as a temporary assistant for Mary Jackson. Selectman Moritz seconded. Roll call – all – motion carried.**

The Board discussed personnel and legal.

Opened public portion at 6:00pm

Chairman Boisseau said Selectman Moore wants a Board member to bring up a positive from the previous week that is happening or happened in the town.

Selectman Moore said her, and Mary came up with idea. She wanted to compliment Yitz of Presidential Mtn. Resorts. She said how he has done an amazing job of cleaning up the property and brought in some beautiful cabins.

**PUBLIC INPUT**

Cheryl Jensen said last week she asked a question about markers – she was told they are not being finished this year due to pandemic. Will be done next year.

Mrs. Jensen asked if there were liability issues for Halloween and X-mas’ events. She said other towns are cancelling it. Chairman Boisseau said we are not sponsoring the event. April explained how we address town properties and liability. Selectman Moritz said she believes Chief Anderson may have said they won’t be doing X-mas in Bethlehem.

Chris McGrath – will be using safety measures for the trunk or treat. He said there will be sanitizer available, will stay their distance, no contact etc.

Barry Zitser said there is a NRRA meeting on November 11/04/20 and the town has the right to vote. He said it would be great if a Board member could attend. It is at 9 – 10:30 in the morning. Selectman Jensen has copy of the notice. He said Margaret Gale may go as well.

Sue Greenlaw, Bethlehem Elementary School came to talk with the Board about the possibility of the highway department plowing the school. She said they received only one bid and it was $5000.00 more than last year. She also said she knows costs are associated with it and would pay the town if it worked out. Chairman Boisseau said he is worried about budgeting for the materials and extra payroll expense. Mrs. Greenlaw understands that and said they could pay hourly or by the job. Selectman Caplain would like to see if Brett could cost it out. Also, does he have the resources or would he have to hire additional staff. He also asked how the priority of who gets plowed first would be determined. Selectman Jensen said Profile may ask next. Mrs. Greenlaw understands all of that and thought it would be worth discussing it and exploring the option. Chairman Boisseau said the earliest it could happen would be next year due to budget planning.

**Chris Canney from Firstlight – Fiber optics** – Invited engineer in case questions he couldn’t answer. He said the company is more than 20 years old with 1000 employees. Mr. Canney said Pease is the location base in NH. He explained they manage their own networks and use their own fibers. They acquired companies that used to provide fiber up here. They provide locally based service and support. Fiber is at corner of 142 and 302. It would not be expensive to run it down main street. He said you pay cost over the long term and said they don’t serve banks, hospitals and schools. Product is dedicated – never shared with neighbor. It is more expensive than Broadband. Reliability is 99.999%. Superior internet service. 100/100 is $380.00 a month. Can contact him if interested in service.

**Working with other towns to improve Spectrum** – Selectman Jensen said he received a call from Sugar Hill asking if we are interested in forming a group to expand Spectrum services in towns. He said it would be funded by grants. Selectman Moritz asked if we would do this along with the other consortium we already belong to. Selectman Jensen said he is not sure, but Board would not want to stop being part of that consortium. Board agreed to explore it.

**Selectman Moore moved to approve the Wayside Inn to serve liquor in the field next to the Inn for a wedding on Saturday. Chairman Boisseau seconded. Roll call – all – motion carried.**

**Board communication** – newsletter and Facebook page – Chairman Boisseau said he would like to come back around and talk about how it is going and do they want to keep it or not. Selectman Moore said she thought it was a good idea, but the lawyer cautioned us. She said she wants to back off from it and said she does not think it should be from a Select Board member. Selectman Jensen said he does the Facebook page and about 600 people visit the page. It is mostly meeting notices, covid info, drought info. He said he also posted about another round of funds for Main St. He hasn’t received any complaints about the page. Selectman Moore said she doesn’t follow the page and if it is purely info from the state and what he spoke of she doesn’t have a problem with that. Selectman Jensen said it also includes a link to the newsletter. He said people appreciate the newsletter. Selectman Caplain asked if they were focusing on Facebook page or newsletter and was told both. Chairman Boisseau said some items that get out are great. He is not on social media so doesn’t see it. Chairman Boisseau also said if there is conflicting information from what was discussed at the board meeting and what is the liability of that and mentioned a business owner who saw info about him in the newsletter and there was backlash from that. He asked what are we comfortable with as a Board with sharing. Selectman Moritz said anything that was discussed at a meeting is fair game and said 0utside of that they would need to determine what should be said. It is not the voice of the Board if they don’t know what is being said. If it is from the Select Board should only be what was discussed at a public board meeting or have someone else do it. Selectman Jensen said it is public info from meetings and happenings around town. Selectman Moore said there was something in there about a business and it didn’t have 2 sides to the story. The business owner was upset about it. Selectman Jensen would like to know what the issue is. Chairman Boisseau asked the Board what type of info they want published on Facebook and in the newsletter. They were cautioned by attorney so want to discuss it. He said public information that is put out there is a great resource but is it something the board wants/should do. Selectman Caplain said people have had positive feedback about newsletter but should limit it to discussions from meetings. Selectman Moritz said there was feedback about when Arlington owed us money. It was discussed in public but that is feedback she heard. Other issue we heard from legal about. Selectman Jensen suggested he do it and have it not be an official select board newsletter. Selectman Moritz is fine with that and doesn’t see it as being a liability to the town. She said there was a public document not discussed in a meeting. The person who it was about heard about it from the newsletter because they didn’t receive their letter from the state yet. Selectman Jensen said it is a public document. Selectman Moritz said it wasn’t discussed in a meeting. Selectman Moore said it can go too far and just because it is a document that came to the office doesn’t mean it should be put in the newsletter. Chairman Boisseau said he is not on FB so not able to see what is put out there as a Select Board. He said he is not reading every newsletter. He talks to people. Selectman Caplain said they would be okay if it was only items that were discussed at a meeting. They discussed it being Selectman Jensen’s newsletter. Will discuss again at next meeting – next week. Selectman Jensen said he would hate for it not to come from the Select Board.

Cheryl Jensen said people have commented but Board members don’t even read the newsletter. People not on the Board should not put out a newsletter. She would worry about it being accurate and true. Chairman Boisseau said the Board has tried to be transparent and said the big question is what info to put out there. Allegra Wright said Selectman Jensen is the one to put it out and if there is a problem with it, he should be made aware of it. He should not do it under his name either because he will get the slack for it. He can email it to the board to get the ok before it is published. Selectman Jensen knows more of what is going on in town because he is on Facebook. She also said the Board should consider a noise ordinance. Chairman Boisseau said he thinks Selectman Jensen is doing a great job but doesn’t think being on Facebook is a requirement of his duty of being a selectman. Barry Zitser said he agrees with Allegra and it should be a town newsletter. He said to give the board a day’s notice to give board time to give feedback. Also, provide a way for people to rebut info in newsletter. Selectman Moritz said there are unforeseen consequences to things and keeping it to what is discussed in public they are all on the same page. Chris McGrath hopes it stays as it is and keep the Facebook page. Appreciates the transparency. Selectman Caplain agrees with Mr. Zitser about sending it to Board and giving them a day to give feedback.

**OTHER**

Selectman Caplain gave an **update on golf course**. He said they had a public hearing for subdivision and there were concerns with buyer about property lines and access areas. He said they did a walk through over the weekend with buyers and surveyor and they came to a good agreement to extend the easement already given to give more access. The surveyor will finish the survey. Closing will extend until Nov. 15th to allow time for survey to be completed and buyers to walk property lines.

**Minutes – Oct. 5 – Selectman Moritz moved to approve. Selectman Caplain seconded. Roll – all – motion carried.**

**7:21 Chairman Boisseau moved to go into non-public session RSA 91A:3 II for personnel. Selectman Caplain seconded. Roll -all – motion carried.**

The board discussed personnel and accepted the resignation from April Hibberd.

**At 7:57 Chairman Boisseau moved to adjourn. Selectman Caplain seconded. Roll call – all - motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

April Hibberd

Administrative Assistant