Bethlehem Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes

January 11, 2021

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

Chairman Boisseau opened the meeting at 6:05 and reminded people to leave their microphones on mute.

Positive for the week: Selectman Jensen: Residents and visitors now have access to 273 acres of land among the Ammonoosuc River. The Ammonoosuc River Forest consists of 80 acres on the north side of 302 and 193 acres on the south. The project was made possible by Dick Gould who sold the property to The Society of Protection of NH Forests.

**Public Input:**

Rita Farrell asked the location of the Ammonoosuc River Forest – Selectman Jensen explained the location.

Chris McGrath –Mr. McGrath asked if the town could add signage regarding helmets at the skating rink and if there was a way residents could get their hands on a copy of the budget before the hearing.

Rita Farrell –Ms. Farrell asked if there was a final version of the proposed noise ordinance and if there was a way the PD could make their presence known more downtown to slow cars traveling through the downtown area.

**Town meeting options**

Chairman Boisseau presented the 3 options for town meetings. 1. Normal, no changes. 2. Hybrid – online discussion and drive-up voting. 3. Push date back and hold in person normal meetings. Mary Lou Krambeer attending a meeting for moderators. Ms. Krambeer’s recommendation would be to push back the meetings to a later date and hold in person deliberative and voting sessions. The board discussed the 3 options and the concerns for representation for all residents at the meetings and the concern for the safety of the residents. The board had questions regarding term length with a pushed back date. They determined a date in June would be preferable as the high school students would be out of school and there would be less risk using the gym for meetings. Veronica Morris mentioned the strength of the WiFi at the school if they are going to be broadcasting the meeting. Chris McGrath asked if the budget hearing was going to be held as planned next week and if residents could get copies of the budget before the meeting.

Chairman Boisseau made a motion to postpone 2021 town meeting until point in future. Selectman Moore seconded - roll call – all – motion passed.

**Noise Ordinance**

Chairman Boisseau stated next week that the first public hearing on the proposed noise ordinance was scheduled and they were having a discussion before the public hearing to cover the basics of the ordinance and get Chief DeMoranville’s opinion on the ordinance. The board and Chief DeMoranville discussed the initial draft of the proposed ordinance. They made edits and streamlined the proposed ordinance before the public hearing next week. Chairman Boisseau opened the floor to public input. Veronica Morris asked if there was an exemption for emergencies and stated Sugar Hill has a good section on firearms in their ordinance for reference.

**COVID memorial**

Selectman Caplain brought to the board’s attention the COVID memorial on January 19th at 5:30pm. The lights on the town hall are to be lit and churches are ringing bells. The board discussed the memorial. Selectman Caplain made a motion to participate in the nationwide COVID memorial and to honor the front-line workers. Selectman Jensen seconded – roll call – all – motion passed.

**Budget review**

Chairman Boisseau gave a broad look at the proposed budget. –2020 - $2,737,738, 2021 $2,832,673 - $93,935 difference – 3% increase. The majority of increases are insurance and maintenance items for town buildings along with the salary for direct assistance and the marketing money added. He thanked the department heads for keeping the budget tight and adding thoughtful items. They budget will be available online and hard copied will be available in the entryway of the town hall.

**Liquor approval – Chandler**

Selectman Moritzmade a motion to move forward with the liquor license for hotel – Selectman Moore seconded – roll call – all – motion passed.

**Follow Up**

Selectman Caplain stated the town applied for and was awarded an energy audit grant. The audit will be performed in early/mid-February.

Selectman Jensen discussed options to get fiber internet in town. A regional committee would need to be formed to pursue combining efforts with surrounding towns. The board discussed. Selectman Jensen will move forward with forming committee.

Chairman Boisseau discussed putting the heritage center roof work out to bid.

Selectman Moore asked about an update to the phone system upgrade.

**Other**

Selectman Jensen sought approval from the board to add members to the transfer station committee as it has dwindled to half of its original size. He also stated the committee would like to produce an occasional article for the Bethlehem News.

Selectman Caplain – There is a solar array grant whose money was restored and the town will be applying for it.

Selectman Caplain – The TAP grant is available again and can be used to support the Complete Streets effort. There is no commitment and the board agrees to pursue a letter of interest.

**MINUTES NONE**

**At 7:50pm Chairman Boisseau moved to go into non-public session per RSA 91A:3 II for matters of personnel. Selectman Caplain seconded – roll call – all – motioned carried.**

Discussed abatement – agreed tax collector has authority to work with individual.

Marketing info – discussed plan for 2021. Looking into grant options for marketing.

Discussed regional impacts of proposed landfill in Dalton.

Selectman Moritz made a motion to adjourn at 8:25 – Selectman Jensen seconded - roll call – all – passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Fleury

Administrative Assistant