Bethlehem Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes

June 6, 2022

In person – Chairman Caplain, Selectman Jensen, Selectman Morris, Selectman Hibberd, and Selectman Queiroga

Chairman Caplain opened the meeting at 6:00pm and reminded zoom participants to keep their microphones on mute and in-person public members to use podium to speak.

**Public Input**

**Barry Zitser –** Mt Agassiz has a new owner –Select Board can meet with new owner to get plans for mountain – hiking access and a rich history – biking trail to summit and major attraction – would be mutually beneficial to town and new owners.

**Façade Grant approval –**

2 Grant Applications – White Mountain Transmission and 2191 Main Street – board recommended approving Transmission shop and did not recommend approving 2191 Main Street – Jo Presby on committee – second business LLC and didn’t clarify business goals – want more info before sending on for approval – Selectman Hibberd – the first meets guidelines? Yes – Selectman Queiroga – would like to wait on second grant decision until more information is needed – Chairman Caplain – would like to wait on second approval until more information is submitted based on committee’s recommendation – Selectman Morris – agree would like to wait – Chairman Caplain – on first business – can they get more than one grant? Selectman Hibberd – yes in past years – Selectman Queiroga – questions from committee members – should businesses be allowed to ask more than once? Is there enough information out there to get requests? Doesn’t think a limit on number of applications is good idea – Selectman Morris – as long as it’s different projects it makes sense – Frank Claffey - $162,266.14 in account – Selectman Hibberd – balance of loan and façade? – Frank Claffey – both in balance – How much are the grants asking for? Selectman Morris - $7100.00 – half is covered.

**Selectman Morris made a motion to approve the grant for White Mountain Transmission for 50% of project cost up to $5000 – Selectman Queiroga seconded – roll call – all – motion passed.**

**Little Free Pantry Opening**

**Selectman Jensen –** Little Free Pantry is open. It was built at no cost to town. The LaFleur’s funded and built the project. Includes electric, heat, and refrigeration. The board discussed opening ceremony ideas.

**Transfer Station Committee**

**Chairman Caplain –** recent events in north country - Selectman Jensen – conservation law foundation sued NHDES about stage 6 expansion – Waste Management Council made decisions – dismissed all but one – no public benefit – WMC – first 5 of 6 years no need for additional capacity provided at Trudeau Rd – capacity needed during 6th year only – unclear on what happens next – worst case scenario – state revokes permit and transfer station closes – would like board to take action on slim chance of closure – seek town counsel opinion and check with Littleton to see if they have the capacity on interim need while emergency transfer station opens. Also, check with Mt Carberry to see if they can accept Bethlehem trash. It’s a good idea to get ahead of it – Chairman Caplain – counsel expectation? – Selectman Jensen – to see if we need to take actions – Selectman Morris – hard to see what state and NCES is doing until something happens – nothing to do until it happens – suggest Twin Mountain as well for interim use – possibly regional collaboration for refuse – geography of town is tough to have transfer station on one side or the other – regionalization of transfer stations could make it easier for all surrounding towns to handle capacity – Chairman Caplain – 2 pieces – short term plans and long term plan for regionalization – does not make sense to approach counsel at this point – Selectman Jensen – no vote needed and skipping counsel – Selectman Morris – Highway Department still permitted for emergency transfer station use – Barry Zitser – should we go out to bid to see what 3rd party hauler to pick up trash at town garage if needed? – town entered into 2 settlement agreements that they have honored – Nancy Strand – attorney if worse case scenario if NCES stops taking trash. Does the town agreement force NCES to accept Bethlehem trash? Selectman Jensen – looked at it in past and the board’s opinion after consulting with counsel is only if they have capacity – Selectman Morris – if shut down, have no capacity – Selectman Queiroga – if they revoke permit and refuse to take trash – would need to figure out interim solution regardless during possible legal battle – Selectman Hibberd – language in agreement about after capacity – will need to research.

**Select Board Procedures**

Chairman Caplain – discussion on new procedures and revisit previously written procedures – Selectman Hibberd – small current procedures – started revisions based on a larger document – Chairman Caplain – harder to start with bigger document – Selectman Queiroga – current procedure is a list – RSA driven – hard to talk about what is added and removed – would like to see shared document where individuals can work on edits as needed – Selectman Hibberd – first talked about before we realized we had a document – can edit from our old document or new document – have not shared new document yet – can add comments but can not discuss comments, that can only be done in public meeting – Selectman Queiroga – very light document – surprising – Selectman Hibberd – working off New Durham document as happy medium – Selectman Morris – meeting information, relationship with staff, working with other boards, Selectman Queiroga – working with other boards important – appropriate when going to other boards and not overstepping boundaries - Selectman Morris – planning board and solar project good example – Selectman Queiroga – would like a cheat sheet to visualize work flow with other boards – Selectman Hibberd – make sure clarify building process moving forward – Selectman Jensen – building permits – clarify as board – when and how permits issued – approval of select board – PMR specifically – restaurant build – select board discussed request from PMR to change standard practice – planning board, site plan, permit – asked to ignore site plan – 3 members at meeting agreed not to move forward with the permit – at the last planning board meeting it was brought up by PMR engineer that they would like to waive site plan again – Tara Bamford, professional planner retained by planning board – building permit always comes last – in existing site plan regulations to issue permit after site plan review – select board should make it clear that permit will come after site plan approval – Chairman Caplain – board spoke about restaurant issue in meeting with all 5 members, nothing issued until it came back to board – also at planning board meeting PMR engineer flipped in moving forward with or without permit with behind the scenes work to get other requirements before getting permit – septic parts not available so it pushed project back by weeks – moved into following year – Selectman Jensen – not his impression – moving forward – looked at site plan regulations, specifically commercial structure, needs site plan approval before permit issued – Chairman Caplain – spoke with Mike Bruno to clarify - Selectman Queiroga – clarifying – nothing on table to approve on this point – Selectman Hibberd – tip toeing around other permit issued – interim code officer recommended cease and desist, Chairman Caplain contacted PMR to have them come in and finish paperwork and then issued permit – Chairman Caplain – discussion on restaurant – Selectman Morris – commercial projects need site plan review – Chairman Caplain – restaurant different from rec area – Mike Bruno gave information – Selectman Jensen – opinion that chairman of the select board was lobbying the chairman of the planning board to go around building procedures to issue permit – Chairman Caplain – strong accusation – seeking input from planning board – Selectman Morris - concerned – the board was given guidance to not have conversations without board approval and was given specific instruction to not go outside meetings to give board guidance – hot dog vendor good example – given stern instructions – chairman solicited building permit application information and had ongoing conversations with business owners – Chairman Caplain – looked at it differently – fixing problem where there was a problem – other members felt he overstepped – not his intention and apologize for those actions – not intention to overstep board and go around -Selectman Queiroga – recommend to keep conversation moving forward – make clear in procedures that site plan is needed before permits – if need to go around process should be in procedures – if needed to reach out to businesses as board should be according to procedures – Selectman Morris – formal request from PMR to go by site plan review – no response yet – Selectman Hibberd – all information should go through Tim Fleury to prevent board overstepping

**Selectman Jensen made a motion to have Select Board not issue restaurant permit to PMR without site plan review – Selectman Morris seconded** – **discussion** – Chairman Caplain not single out PMR– Selectman Jensen – only singled out because they requested waiver from site plan review – would clarify that they need to go to planning board and site plan review – wants restaurant to open with proper site plan review – Selectman Hibberd – did research on Reklis on Synagogue – went through planning board minutes - rules are meant to be followed – site plans need to reflect how both buildings are to look – all need to follow same process – Selectman Morris – voting on motion cements appeal to select board is denied – Selectman Queiroga – should we add appeal to motion to clarify it – **Selectman Morris –upon review, the Select Board declines the request to waive site plan review and shall not issue permit until site plan review is completed – amendment – Selectman Hibberd seconded – roll call – all - less Chairman Caplain abstain 4-0 – motion passed**

**Future meeting schedule**

Chairman Caplain – next Monday and move back to every other week – June 13th, 27th skip 2 weeks July 11th, 25th – Selectman Queiroga Tuesday 7/26th ? – Selectman Hibberd – can join remotely if quorum exists in person at town offices – Selectman Morris - Aug 8th to cover if 25th isn’t covered? Board continued to discuss future meeting times. August 8th and 22nd.

Future dates: 6/13, 6/27, 7/11, 7/25, 8/8, 8/22.

**Employee Benefits**

**Selectman Morris –** working with Selectman Hibberd on PTO policy – difficult for some departments to take time – highway in summer need to use time because they can’t use it in the winter – use it or lose it doesn’t work for all departments – looked at policies from around state – buyback and carry over options – 4 weeks accrual max – if not used, can carry over 1 week – buy back time over 1 week at half price 1 week maximum – carry over one week and buy back one week at half price – remainder is lost – Selectman Hibberd – struggle to have all employees take all time – Selectman Queiroga – how much additional monies is needed to buy back those weeks at half price? Not in budget currently – would like to know amount before approving – need to list it as full time employees only – clarification – Selectman Morris – slightly urgent issue – adopting in lumps instead of all at once – Selectman Hibberd - does carrying over carry over liability – Selectman Queiroga – no, PTO time is in budget – if needed. Request in writing by department head 2 weeks in advance – Selectman Morris – approved by select board – Selectman Hibberd – only department heads have approved in the past – Chairman Caplain – 2 weeks in advance can be tricky for last minute – would like to see option to allow leeway for department head approval for last minute requests – Selectman Hibberd – department head approval needed for roll over– take vacation time when available to make it easier for department heads – buyout needs to be budgeted – Chairman Caplain – bring back next time with changes? – Selectman Morris – yes – Selectman Hibberd – needed to change part time PTO to reflect actual hours worked – use aquatic director as example – full time in summer and part time in winter – Selectman Hibberd – can it be made per position? – Chairman Caplain – have to check on that – Selectman Queiroga continuous service means to her, comes back year after year – ok with leaving hours open to clarify – Selectman Hibberd – 48 weeks during year? – Selectman Queiroga – makes sense – Selectman Morris – good to add all part time workers to make it an option to stay home for employees if needed

Selectman Morris – STD and LTD – lacking right now – covers issues outside of PTO – covers small circumstances for employees – additional benefit – will re send quotes to all members – Selectman Jensen – benefits? 60% of salary less social security benefits for long term – discussed potential benefits with social security and LTD combined – Selectman Hibberd – Life insurance $2300 for all employees – 1-times employee annual salary rounded up to whole thousand – up to $50,000 – Selectman Queiroga – asking for vote or to amend for next budget round? – Selectman Morris – moving to issue for July 1 as half of budget is gone – Selectman Jensen – good idea to keep employees – Selectman Queiroga – like to see benefits added – would like to see where money comes from to be safe – Chairman Caplain – can use ARPA funds to offset current budget items to free up budget to cover that – Selectman Morris/Selectman Hibberd – come back next week with recommendation – Selectman Morris – look over budget to see what ARPA funds can be used for to offset budget – Chairman Caplain – can go to department heads for input to see where they are on budget and unused items and items that they are going over majorly

**ARPA - Follow up**

**Chairman Caplain** – suggestions from last week – next step to get estimates to all to go over list – Selectman Morris – prioritize list by time crunch as well – Selectman Hibberd – food pantry can save money with solar – Chairman Caplain – storage container and look at shed pricing too – Chairman Caplain – town hall generator – Selectman Jensen will look into it – Selectman Morris – final rule gives leeway to cover matching grants – Chairman Caplain – sign posts – Angel Larcom – Bethlehem Events covers signage to make it easier – Chairman Caplain – urban planning of town hall area – Selectman Morris – how using land around town hall – keep it from being cluttered with all additional buildings – would need to put it out to bid – Urban Landscaping – go to bid because of price – Chairman Caplain – worth calling planners to get ballpark of amount – Chairman Caplain – lights on poles – Bethlehem Events – Selectman Morris – worth Bethlehem Events applying for Main Street grants? – Selectman Jensen – Nancy Strand approached with potential donated items that town would sign for – Chairman Caplain – sidewalk in front of WREN – Village District – Selectman Hibberd – update quote for sidewalk from library to town offices – add more funds to go to school – Selectman Jensen – why not Village District issue? – Selectman Morris – part of town wide issue, not just district issue – Chairman Caplain – can reach out to district to see how to move forward – Chairman Caplain – compost container bulk purchase – Selectman Morris – can get numbers from companies – question of scale? – number of purchases – Selectman Morris – Library game cameras for story walk approximately $200 – Selectman Jensen – don’t have $200 in budget? – Chairman Caplain – part of prioritizing list – Selectman Jensen – gas prices – get info from PD and HD and their budgets -

**Solar Update**

**Chairman Caplain –** comments from Library on process installing panels – Barrington sent email chain setting up installation week in advance – other side of story from last week -

**Board Follow Up items**

**Move to next week**

**Abatement – 421-9-6**

Chairman Caplain – 421-9-6 - $1760.00 – corrected acreage – recommended

**Selectman Hibberd made a motion to approve map 421-9-6 abatement of $1760 – Selectman Jensen seconded – roll call – all – motion passed**

410- 6 - $1012.67 – incorrect UC percentage – assessor recommended

**Selectman Hibberd made a motion to approve abatement of $1012.67 on Map 410-6 – Selectman Morris seconded – roll call – all - motion passed**

**Minutes 5/24/2022**

**Selectman Queiroga made a motion to accept minutes from 5/24/2022 - Selectman Hibberd seconded – roll call – all - motion passed**

**Other**

**Selectman Jensen –** HEB engineering discussed projects in town - $11million in hazard mitigation grant available – approval from board to resubmit same projects from the last grant process– Maple Hill Road, Parker Hill culvert, River Road culvert – only letter of intent, no commitment

Chairman Caplain – Chief DeMoranville – asking to raise detail rate to offset fuel and maintenance –

Officer pay: $45 increased to $55 per hour, Without cruiser billed at: $65 increased to $75 per hour, With cruiser billed at: $80 increased to $95 per hour.

**Selectman Morris made a motion to approve new detail rates – Selectman Queiroga – seconded – roll call – all – motion passed.**

**Chairman Caplain made a motion to go to Non-public Session per RSA 91A-3 II (legal, personnel, reputation) @ 7:55 – Selectman Morris seconded – roll call – all – motion passed**

Selectman Hibberd made a motion to seal nonpublic minutes as they may adversely affect the reputation of any person other than a member of the board – Chairman Caplain seconded - roll call - all motion passed.

**Chairman Caplain made a motion to adjourn @ 8:12 Selectman Hibberd seconded – roll call – all – motion passed.**

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Fleury

Administrative assistant