Bethlehem Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes

October 31, 2022

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

Chairman Caplain opened the meeting at 6:04.

**Public Input-** no public input

**Mary Jackson- E poll Books-** Mary Jackson, town clerk, provided information on E Poll pads which is an electronic check in for elections. The Ballot clerks would utilize the E Poll Pads in addition to a paper check. Ms. Jackson is requesting 3 E Poll Pads: 2 for Ballot Clerks and 1 for the Supervisors of the checklist. Ms. Jackson would like to purchase them now, so they are utilized for the March election to get used to the new system before a huge election year. Select person Hibberd asked how the E Poll pad would work with an out of state driver’s license and Ms. Jackson responded that the E Poll Pad would scan the out of state license and show the state it was from on the printed ticket. Select person Queiroga asked how the voter is verified and Ms. Jackson confirmed that the Supervisor of the checklist would have already verified, and the E Poll Pads work in real time, so the information is available to all three devises. Ms. Jackson confirmed that the E Poll Pads will register absentee ballots. The E Poll Pads are $1500 each and all other expenses for the E Poll books will be included in the Clerical Budget. Ms. Jackson is going to verify what forms of ID are compatible with the E Poll Pads and is going to provide the board with a breakdown of the expenses attributed to the E Poll Pads.

**Auditors’ proposals** It was agreed to continue with Roberts & Greene, PLLC at the 2021 rate for 2022

**Franconia STR working session-** It was noted that it was a working session because some people were not able to participate in the discussion because it was Halloween and there will be a future public hearing where comment will be welcome. The board agreed an important objective of a Short-Term Rental ordinance is to identify a responsible contact for the property in case of emergency. It was stated that it is not the intent of the Select Board to police Short Term Rentals but to find a solution that works for the community when an issue arises. It was agreed by the Select board that Franconia’s STR ordinance is a good starting point for drafting a STR ordinance. Chairman Caplain suggested reconsidering the annual fee and inspection. Select person Queiroga recommended getting emergency contact information for both short term rental properties and long-term rentals because having emergency contacts for both would benefit the town. In addition, Select person Queiroga did not agree with requiring a STR property to get a meals and rental tax ID because VRBO and AirB&B directly pay M&R tax to the state. Select person Morris wanted a distinction to be made for property owners who allow for fireworks and outside fires. Select person Jensen point out a STR ordinance is an insurance policy to the community that difficult properties will be dealt with. He continued STR properties in good standing won’t be impacted by an ordinance other than registering so the town has an emergency contact. Select person Hibberd suggested the town get clarification regarding if STR are a permittable use in our zoning regulations. She continued if STR are not currently a permittable use it may need to be added as such before a STR ordinance would be enforceable. It was agreed by the board to eliminate inspecting STR from the ordinance because it is unrealistic for the town to have an annual inspection but rather handle individual complaints when necessary. Select person Morris is going to make the boards recommended changes to the Franconia STR ordinance.

**Police Cruiser Select Person Hibberd made a motion to purchase a new police cruiser with funds from the police cruiser capital reserve. Chairman Caplain seconded, and all were in favor.**

**Conservation Commission-Ivan Ash and Rachelle Lyons – Select person Morris made a motion to accept Ivan Ash and Rachelle Lyons to the Conservation Commission. Chairman Caplain seconded, and all were in favor.**

**Revised Rec code of conduct-** Discussion on the Rec Code of conduct was tabled until 11/7 meeting

**Meeting schedule** It was decided to meet on November 7th, 21st and 28th

**Salary Increase guidance continued**- It was agreed that the standard pay increase is recommended at 3%. Select person Morris pointed out that the total increase should be 3% however that one employee could have a higher increase based on performance if the overall department pay increase remains at 3%. Select person Hibberd recommended having someone from Health Trust come in and explain FSA to town employees. Select person Morris recommended keeping the current insurance benefits the same with adding short term disability and long-term disability for 2023.

**Minutes**- **Select person Morris made a motion to approve the minutes from October 17th, 2023, once they have been amended to add “indigenous people day” under public input. Select person Queiroga seconded and Select person Hibberd was also in favor. Chairman Caplain and Select person Jensen abstained.**

**Other**- Select person Hibberd asked for an update on Community Power. Chairman Caplain explained that the Energy Commission was planning on giving an update to the select board soon. Chairman Caplain updated the board on the solar project. The project is operational however it has been recommended to wait because the town may be eligible for a 30% tax credit/reward in 2023. In addition, the Energy Commission is working with the Village to install solar, and they also may be eligible for the tax credit. PMR is ready to move forward and pay for the crosswalk. DOT needs confirmation that the Town will maintain the crosswalk going forward. Chairman Caplain went on that PMR will pay for the equipment and the town will install and maintain. Select person Morris suggested the town look into maintenance agreement with PMR. He also mentioned that PMR is interested in adding sidewalks connecting the properties. It was noted that for public safety something must be done.

**Chairman Caplain made a motion to go into non-public per RSA-91A-3 for reasons of personnel, reputation and legal. Select person Queiroga seconded and roll call followed.**

Chairman Caplain made a motion to adjourn 8:00 pm Select person Queiroga seconded, and all were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Moritz

Administrative assistant