

Minutes of January 23, 2017 Regular Selectboard Meeting

Present: Board Members Carl Russell, Lisa Hill, Moe Brigham, and Chris Jarvis. Others Present: Town Manager Keith Arlund, Assistant Town Manager Abbie Sherman, Fire Chief David Aldrighetti, Geneva Gaiko, Kirk White, Rick Benson, Kevin Barry, Lisa Warhol, Lindley Brainard, David Sambor, Julie Hinman, Rebecca Stone, and Lisa Campbell for the “Herald of Randolph.”

Chairperson Russell called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Approval of the Agenda: Hill requested an executive session to discuss personnel matters at the end of the meeting.

Public Comment:

1. Lisa Campbell noted difficulty hearing Board members during meetings and inquired as to use of a sound system. Arlund noted that the current system is not usable and has outlived its usefulness. He is researching a new system, but cost is a factor. Geneva Gaiko suggested contacting the school.
2. Fire Chief David Aldrighetti was present to advise the Board of a phone call made to the Town Offices regarding photos posted on the fire department’s Facebook page that one person found offensive. The department did take the photo down and issued a public apology. Aldrighetti noted that the department is careful to protect privacy when posting, and he does not agree with removing photos. The department has received numerous positive feedback with very few complaints on their posts. Hill expressed concern about family finding out about incidents via Facebook. Jarvis noted that by the time photos have been posted, it is old news.

Appointments: Representatives of the Bethel Revitalization Initiative (BRI) re. Bethel Better Block Grant Report. Various members of the BRI were present to provide feedback and discuss next steps from the Better Block Grant. The group will continue to spearhead Bethel University, pop-up shops, and research funding opportunities. It was noted that the BRI has been selected by the Vermont Arts Council to submit an application for funding to supply light post banners throughout the downtown. The BRI would like to initiate a number of pilot programs, the first being installing temporary pedestrian islands on Main Street to try for one season. Other potential projects may include downtown seating, awnings over businesses, and landscape improvements.

In the short-range, the BRI requested support from the Board to use Town staff for small projects and for coverage by the Town’s insurance. There may be a need for some cash funding to initiate projects. The BRI is seeking mid-term projects to assist or reward property owners, and asked that the Board consider a tax stabilization policy. In the long-range, the BRI asked that the Town take an active role by continuing to support grassroot efforts, maintaining the Village Center Designation, and participating in more proactive planning. Additional suggesting for Town support included: broad community visioning process (the last one being done in 1993), a more robust Town Plan process, improvements to the Town website, making the Town Hall more marketable, and working in more attractive details with infrastructure projects.

Hill noted that there may be some funds available to assist with BRI projects. She supports tax stabilization and felt that it was in the Board’s best interest to support entrepreneurial efforts. Russell noted that the Planning Commission will be initiating the Town Plan process and there may be positions available on that Board. He suggested that the BRI be a co-facilitator of that process. The Board then discussed the possibility of tax stabilization. The Board would need either a general authorization from the voters, or it could be done on a case by case basis as has been past practice. The Board gave general consensus for the summer pilot program.

Reports, Motions, & Ordinances:

1. **Appointment of Members to the Conservation Commission.** Motion by Lisa Hill, seconded by Moe Brigham, to appoint Katie O’Neil and Ferron Griffin to the Bethel Conservation Commission. Motion passed unanimously.
2. **Matters Associated with Town Meeting and the Annual Report:**
 - a. **Warning for Town Meeting.** Rick Benson was present on behalf of the Town Meeting Committee to request a change in order of the Articles so that special funding Articles would be before the Article for the General Fund budget. The Committee felt this would help to alleviate the confusion that occurred at the 2016 Town Meeting. The Board discussed alternative ways ensure better understating of the Articles and the budget. This will either be covered at the start of Town Meeting and/or a copy of the budget

breakdown will be displayed on a projector screen. Benson also requested that Seth Stoddard be contracted again for sound and noted a change in the way the microphones should be set up. Arlund advised that a request from Windsor County Partners was missed during preparation of the Human Services appropriations. The request has been added in, and the General Fund budget has been updated to reflect this. Motion to approve the Warning for Town Meeting 2017 pending any petitions received was made by Lisa Hill, seconded by Chris Jarvis. Motion passed unanimously.

- b. Final Review of Annual Report and Budgets.** Jarvis noted a need to explain to the voters the vision of the town for at least the next five year. Sherman suggested including a summary of the Capital Plan in the Town Report. She will send a draft to the Board for review and approval. Discussion ensued regarding delinquent taxes and utilities, noting the need to initiate the tax sale process this year. The Board approved the Selectboard Report.
- 3. 2016 Equalization Study Results.** A copy of the 2016 results was provided to the Board for informational purposes. It was noted that the Coefficient of Dispersion is at 7.03%, a reappraisal being required at 20%.
- 4. Town Manager's Report:**
 - a. Constable's Report.** The Board noted a spike in animal issues. Arlund advised that a cruiser from the Town of Winhall will be available for purchase by Bethel in about a month. Internal budget adjustments will be made as this purchase is sooner than anticipated.
 - b. Status Update of Action Items.**
 - i.** All paperwork for purchase of the new fire truck is complete.
 - ii.** All paperwork for the solid waste equipment purchases has been submitted. Delivery of the equipment is anticipated in early February.
 - iii.** The VLCT will be holding a special meeting on February 15. Arlund will attend as Bethel's voting delegate.
 - iv. Consider Contract Extension.** Motion to authorize Carl Russell to sign the Town Manager contract extension was made by Lisa Hill, seconded by Moe Brigham. Motion passed unanimously.

Minutes and Communications:

- 1. Selectboard Minutes of January 9, 2017 Regular Meeting.** A few minor changes were noted. Motion by Lisa Hill, seconded by Moe Brigham, to accept the minutes with changes. Motion passed unanimously.
- 2. Other Committee Minutes.** The Board acknowledged receipt of the following minutes: (1) January 18, 2017 Planning Commission meeting; (2) January 12, 2017 Recreation Committee meeting; (3) December 28, 2016 Wellness/Safety Committee meeting; (4) January 17, 2017 Town Meeting Committee meeting; (5) September 14, 2016; October 12, 2016; November 9, 2016; December 7, 2016; and January 11, 2017 Bethel/Royalton Solid Waste Board Management meetings.

Other Business:

- 1.** Russell noted the press release regarding Stagecoach, provided as informational only.
- 2.** Russell inquired on the report from the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources regarding conditions of the SWIP. Arlund forwarded the report to all Board members and Chet Brown, Program Manager, is aware of the report.
- 3.** The Board discussed the Town Manager Selection Committee and agreed to wait until closer to February 20 to select members.
- 4.** Transition allowing for the fire department to obtain fuel at the Town Garage is complete. Chief Aldrighetti is setting up protocol within the fire department.

At 7:53 PM, the Board entered executive session to discuss personnel matters by motion of Lisa Hill, seconded by Moe Brigham. Arlund was the only person remaining with the Board. No minutes were kept. The Board exited executive session at 8:40 PM with no action being taken. At 8:40 PM, Lisa Hill made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Moe Brigham. Motion passed unanimously.

Carl Russell

Lisa Hill

Vanessa Brown

Chris Jarvis

Moe Brigham