

Minutes of the January 24, 2011 Meeting of the Board of Selectmen.

Present: Neal Fox, Bill Richards, Joe De Freitas, Delbert Cloud, Jose Lazo, Eric Benson, Don Hirsch, and Amy Danley-White for the "Herald of Randolph."

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Chairman Neal Fox, the Board first reviewing and approving the weekly payroll and payables. The minutes of the January 10, 2011 meeting of the Board were approved by motion of Joe De Freitas, seconded by Bill Richards and unanimously carried.

Don Hirsch of Hirsch Design Studio arrived at this time and was welcomed by Chairman Fox. Mr. Hirsch said he expects a stage curtain contractor to be doing a job estimate at the Barre Opera House later in the week, and would like to have the contractor see the stage at the Town Hall in order to offer recommendations and a cost estimate. Discussion ensued regarding various options associated with such an installation, and it was left that Mr. Hirsch would telephone the Town Office to coordinate a site visit for the suggested purpose. Mr. Hirsch then departed and the Board returned to the order of the agenda.

The Planning Commission minutes of January 19, 2011 were reviewed, particular note being made of individuals that the Planning Commission members thought might have interest in future service on the Commission. It is understood that Andrew Delaney has decided he would be willing to accept an appointment. Motion was made by Bill Richards, seconded by Joe De Freitas and unanimously carried, to appoint Mr. Delaney to the Planning Commission for a term ending July 1, 2013. It was agreed that Delbert Cloud should try to schedule appointments with other people having potential interest, such that the Board would have opportunity to discuss the involved work with them.

The Board then examined information re. the financial standing of the "Cowdrey Fund," this having been received from the Trustees of Public Funds. Motion was made by Bill Richards, seconded by Joe De Freitas and unanimously carried, to approve the "Summary of Account" and to authorize Neal Fox to sign necessary documents for the annual submittal to probate court.

The Board next reviewed the Agency of Transportation's plans for replacement of the River Street Bridge and the impact of that project on Town holdings at five locations. Most of the impacts would be temporary in nature, but a couple of roadside areas along the approaches would be changed slightly in surface grade. Formal "Easements" are necessary to ensure the State's right to perform the described work. After consideration of the involved work and determining that it would be in the public's interest to facilitate getting the project completed, motion was made by Bill Richards, seconded by Joe De Freitas and unanimously carried, to approve the granting of the requested Easements and to sign the associated Vermont Property Transfer Tax Return.

Several documents were then reviewed pertaining to changes being made in the Town's health insurance plan. After due consideration, motion was made by Joe De Freitas, seconded by Bill Richards and unanimously carried, to approve the "Consent Action of the Directors" as follows:

"The following actions are hereby taken by unanimous written consent of the directors of Town of Bethel (the "Company") in lieu of a meeting of the directors.

With respect to the adoption of the Town of Bethel Health Reimbursement Arrangement (the "Plan"), the following resolutions are hereby adopted:

RESOLVED: That the Plan be adopted in the form attached hereto, which Plan is hereby adopted and approved;

RESOLVED FURTHER: That the appropriate officers of the Company be, and they hereby are, authorized and directed to execute the Plan on behalf of the Company;

RESOLVED FURTHER: That the officers of the Company be, and they hereby are, authorized and directed to take any and all actions and execute and deliver such documents as they may deem necessary, appropriate or convenient to effect the foregoing resolutions including, without limitation, causing to be prepared and filed such reports, documents or other information as may be required under applicable law."

It was noted that an application for financial assistance has been filed with the Vermont Department of Forests Parks & Recreation for development of improved trails in the Branliere Town Forest. Confirmation of the submittal was received on January 20, 2011. The Board made a brief review of the completed application and then placed it on file.

The annual "Certificate of Highway Mileage" was discussed, and it was agreed that no additional class 4 roads would be submitted for mapping at this time. The applicable form was thus approved for signature without changes in listed mileage, per motion of Joe De Freitas, seconded by Bill Richards and unanimously carried.

The budget for the Town General Fund was then reviewed to evaluate the anticipated tax rate necessary for support of the budget and separate Articles as might be approved by the voters at the Annual Town Meeting. The total amount of dollars to be raised by taxes is about 5 percent less than was raised the previous year, primarily due to the fact that several approved appropriations in the previous year were for "one time only" purposes.

Jose Lazo asked for an update on the status of the communications tower which would be placed at the Town Garage site. The Board confirmed that the option to execute the lease for the involved area has been exercised by the Vermont Telecommunications Authority. The Town holds the understanding that the construction of the tower may commence at any time.

Delbert Cloud then provided the Board with information about the State of Vermont's plans for implementing a free recycling program for certain electronic apparatus. No final decisions have been made as to how such a program will be operated, but drafts of plans and requests for proposals from private contractors have been prepared by staff at the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation. The Bethel/Royalton solid waste facility is contemplated as a collection location, although the particulars have not yet been established as to how that would be done. More information will be available in the relatively near future, before any decisions have to be made by the Town.

Eric Benson then arrived and offered to answer any questions the Board might have about the "Trails" grant application. The project was discussed in some detail, clarifying several matters about the reasoning behind the routing, the access, and parking availability. No action was required or taken by the Board on this matter, it being informational only.

Mr. Benson suggested that he would like to meet with the Board again to discuss matters involving his role as Moderator at the Annual Meeting. The Board determined that the meeting nights for February would be on Monday the 7th and Monday the 28th, the latter being the best one for final review of business to be conducted at Town Meeting. The meeting on February 7th would be held in lieu of the usual meeting night on the following week.

The Board reviewed a request from "Easter Seals" for a waiver of fees for that agency's use of the conference room at the Town Hall. The Board members determined that the fee would not be waivable as costs do occur when the building is being used.

A response has been received from the Vermont Department of Taxes regarding the Town's appeal of the "Coefficient of Dispersion" calculated by the Department for the Town, this being acknowledgement of the appeal and advice that a meeting would be scheduled in the near future to further discuss the matter. It was agreed that Neal Fox would attend the meeting on behalf of the Board.

With no further business to attend, the motion was made at 9:50 PM to adjourn to Monday, February 7, 2011 at 6:00 PM, this motion being made by Bill Richards, seconded by Joe De Freitas and unanimously carried.

Neal Fox

Bill Richards

Joe De Freitas