

Minutes of March 14, 2016 Regular Select Board Meeting.

Present: Board Members Carl Russell, Lisa Hill, Chris Jarvis, Vanessa Brown. Others present: Town Manager Keith O. Arlund, Assistant Town Manager Abbie Sherman, Geneva Gaiko, Mary Floyd, Jose Lazo, and Maurice Brigham.

Chairperson Russell called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. Russell welcomed newly elected Selectboard members Chris Jarvis and Vanessa Brown.

Public Comment or Inquiry: There was no public comment or inquiry.

Reports, Motions, and Ordinances:

1. Resignation of Selectboard Member Bill Hall. The Board acknowledged Bill Hall's resignation with regret. Russell apologized if any of his actions led to Hall's resignation. Hill thanked Hall for his service on the Board, and in particular for pulling together the Town's financials. Arlund advised that he had provided for posting of the vacancy, per Vermont Statute, and asked if the Board would be following previous procedures to fill the vacancy. Russell asked the other members of the Board for their thoughts. The Board has the option of holding a special Town Meeting to elect a new member for the unexpired 2-year term. Hill felt the Board should stay with the precedence that has been set to advertise and appoint a member. Jarvis noted that holding a special meeting now would mean voters would only need to elect 2 members at Town Meeting 2017 instead of 3 since a Board appointment is only good until the next Town Meeting. Brown noted merit in allowing voters the opportunity to elect a replacement member but was unsure of the number of voters who would show up. Russell advised that two people have reached out to him with interest in serving on the Board. Hill stated there is work the Board needs to complete, but if it can be done with a 4-member Board in the meantime, than she would support holding an election. Mary Floyd would like to see someone filling the vacancy who has prior experience service on the Board, is involved in Town activities, and has a history with the Town; the Board could appoint such a person. Moe Brigham asked what the cost would be to hold an election. Arlund advised it would only be advertising costs and staff time. Motion made by Lisa Hill to ask for inquires to fill the vacancy with the intent of the Board to appoint a new member at the next Selectboard meeting, seconded by Chris Jarvis. The motion carried.
2. Appointment of Town Forest Fire Warden. Bob Dean has been serving in the role as Fire Warden for a number of years and wishes to continue serving in that capacity. Motion by Lisa Hill to reappoint Bob Dean as Bethel's Forest Fire Warden, seconded by Chris Jarvis. The motion carried.
3. Appointment of Members to the Bethel/Royalton Solid Waste Program Board. At the last Selectboard meeting, it was noted that Kristen Judkins and Jennifer Bartleman wish to continue serving. Motion by Hill to reappoint Kristen Judkins and Jennifer Bartleman to the Bethel/Royalton Solid Waste Board, seconded by Vanessa Brown. The motion carried. At the previous meeting, Hill had expressed interest in serving as the Bethel Selectboard representative, but now that there are two additional members, she encouraged Jarvis or Brown to participate on this Board in place of her as she already participates in a few other committees. The Board opted to table this consideration until the next meeting.
4. Conservation Commission: Staggering of Appointment Terms. Arlund advised the Board that when the Conservation Commission was re-established, terms of office were never set. Mary Floyd, Chair of the Conservation Commission, requested the Board wait until after the Commission has met before they make this decision. The Board agreed. Floyd also advised that she recently attended an Agency of Natural Resources meeting and found there are a lot of resources that Bethel needs to tap into. Russell announced that he would like the Town to develop an inventory of roadside species.
5. FY'2016 Budget Status Report Update: General Fund and Enterprise Funds. Arlund presented the Board with the reports as of the close of February and provided an explanation primarily to the new members on the Board. Hill had hoped with the light winter there would be a potential cost savings in the public works materials budget. Arlund advised that there are a number of items that are frontloaded into the budget in the fall including paving, sand, and gravel.
6. Review of FY'2017 Town Budget. Arlund presented the Board with a revised budget with proposed changes to assist in developing the \$56,000 reduction as approved by Bethel voters. Hill advised the other Board members of the timeline need for an approved budget as it is needed to apply for certain grants. Hill also remarked that unfortunately the reduction amount was not based on anything and the numbers in the budget proposed in the Town Report were based on reality. Arlund provided clarification to the Board on the increases in salt and gravel over the last few years, as well as the purpose of the "cumulative deficit" line

item. Russell felt that the public works department could benefit from stringent efficiencies and savings could be found in that department in terms of fuel, supplies, and time management. Hill noted that the department is working out of a building that does not meet their needs, thus inhibiting their ability to be more efficient. Hill further stated that, while the ballots were being counted for the budget, a member of the public approached them and asked when potholes on their road would be fixed. She noted the disconnection between what voters want and what they can afford to pay for. Hill also felt that the Board needs to lead by example. After much discussion, Jarvis proposed the following deductions be included with those made by Arlund (with the exception of the elimination of funds towards the cumulative deficit): \$29,000 from highway rehabilitation; \$12,000 from salt, sand, gravel; and \$3,150 from Public Works wages. Motion to approve these changes was made by Jarvis and seconded by Hill. The motion carried.

Mary Floyd asked the Board if the Town Meeting Warning reflected the approval of the Selectboard. Russell advised that although he signed off on the Warning, he did not necessarily feel bound to it and felt that it was important to level fund the budget. Russell felt that he had signed off on a budget without having his own reservations addressed during the budgeting process. Based on her experience serving on the school board, Floyd felt that it was important for the Board to speak with one voice even if you don't agree and that the budget reflects each member's opinion and approval. She further stated that the Board seemed dysfunctional at Town Meeting.

7. Town Manager's Report:

- a. Constable's Report. Arlund provided the Board with activity logs from Constable Belisle. Hill asked what the mechanism is to get complaints to Belisle. Arlund advised they should be sent to either himself or Abbie Sherman.
- b. Arlund provided the Board with copies of the completed FY'14 single audit for informational purposes. The audit for FY'15 should be completed soon.
- c. Acting as the Board of Liquor Commissioners, liquor licenses were approved for Locust Creek Store and Tozier's Restaurant.
- d. Status Update of Action Items.
  - i. Cherry Hill Cemetery: Arlund has sent a letter to the adjacent landowner advising him to address the culvert that is draining water into some of the cemetery lots. The Town will also be extending the first culvert to provide short-term relief of the water issues there.
  - ii. Conservation Commission Funds: Regarding the \$4,500 need as matching funds, Arlund has asked for clarity as to when the money will be spent. Arlund can find the funds for FY'16, but not FY'17. He also asked that the Commission forecast funds needed for future budgets.
  - iii. Sidewalk Winter Maintenance: Arlund has spoken with the affected property owners.
  - iv. Recreation Center Logging Road: The Town has the State's support for an extension.
  - v. Action Items List: Russell would like to schedule working meetings to pick up some of the lingering action items. Hill noted that VT-Alert, which is up and running, is a large part of the Communications Plan.

Minutes and Communications:

1. Selectboard Minutes of February 22, 2016. Motion to approved the minutes as written was made by Lisa Hill, seconded by Carl Russell. Motion passed.
2. Committee Minutes. The Board acknowledged receipt of the following: (1) January 20, 2016 and February 17, 2016 Planning Commission minutes; (2) February 22, 2016 Town Meeting Committee Minutes; and (3) March 8, 2016 Conservation Commission Minutes.
3. Other Communications. The Board acknowledged that the Town did not receive the Philip D. Levesque Award for the Recreation Center.

Any Other Business Necessary to Come Before the Board. There was no other business.

Potential Executive Session to Discuss Potential Litigation. At 8:05 PM, Lisa Hill made the motion to enter executive session to discuss potential litigation, seconded by Vanessa Brown. The motion passed. Keith Arlund was the only one remaining with the Board; no minutes were kept. The Board came out of executive session with no action taken. At 8:35 PM Lisa Hill made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Chris Jarvis. Motion passed.

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Carl Russell

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Lisa Hill

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Vanessa Brown

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Chris Jarvis