

Minutes of May 18, 2015 Select Board Meeting

Present: Board members Bill Hall, Carl Russell and Lisa Hill. Others present: Town Manager Keith Arlund, Assistant Town Manager Abbie Sherman, Rosalie Benson, Jim Gray, Richard Adams, Valdis Rubenis, Clint Gray, Forrest Griffin, David Griffing.

Chairman Hall called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Public Comment or Inquiry: There was no public comment.

Public Discussion Regarding Shooting Operations at the Town Gravel Pit:

Bill Hall initiated the discussion by first reading the letter received by the Select Board from a group of citizens whom requested the change in hours at the gravel pit to be closed on Sundays from Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day weekend. Hall then opened the meeting to public discussion.

Rosalie Benson stated that the rules of operation weren't being respected and likes the idea proposed in the letter.

Valdis Rubenis stated he's glad the shooting range is there, but it acts as an amphitheater and he would like one quiet day per week.

Richard Adams has been looking after the pit and goes down whenever he is aware that someone is there to make sure the rules are being followed. He has found that the number of violations have lessened and few people are disrespecting the rules. He also noted that the number of people using the pit has picked up, primarily because it is a safe place to shoot and there are not enough ranges in the State. Adams stated the range is one of Bethel's recreational opportunities and it would be a shame for shooters to lose that right. He felt the request for reduced hours wasn't unreasonable, but didn't want to lose Sundays because that is the only day many working people are able to use it. Adams has also made it known that he should be contacted if there are problems.

Jim Gray pointed out that the other side of the pit is privately-owned, and at times those property owners are using their side of the pit, which is perfectly legal. However, it makes it hard for those within hearing range to know which side is being used.

Forrest Griffin stated that he only has Sundays to shoot. Griffin offered the compromise of the eliminating Sunday use from the weekend after Father's Day to the 1st weekend in August. He's concerned about people shooting at home on private property. He also pointed out that not much shooting occurs during the winter months due to the cold and snow.

Clint Gray, a member of the Vermont Federation of Sportsman's Club, reminded the Board that the current operations were developed with safety in mind and he is extremely proud of this shooting range. He's also concerned that if it is closed down on Sundays, shooting will occur in backyards. Gray suggested the Board consider the requirement that users of the pit have a hunting/fishing/trapping license, which may reduce the number of users.

Carl Russell is impressed that the site has been made safe for shooting, however, sound was completely different issue which was not adequately addressed by the Board's first effort. Russell views the site as an unpermitted use of Town property, but is also concerned about enforcing restrictions on its use.

Lisa Hill stated that the proximity of the pit to Peavine Park makes it a less attractive option for families. Hill suggested the Board look into the Spring Hollow property as an option for a shooting range since it's very similar topographically.

The Board discussed the options for the compromise and the most effective regulation of the site. Lisa Hill made the motion to close the shooting operations in the gravel pit on Sundays from Memorial Day to Labor Day and to revisit the matter at a future meeting, seconded by Carl Russell, Bill Hall concurred. Arlund stated the Town will take care of posting notice. Russell advised that, moving forward, the public should advise Richard Adams of any issues involve the shooting operations at the pit so that the Board will know how they are moving forward.

Any Other Business Necessary to Come Before the Board.

Arlund advised the Board that the Bethel Fire Department will be holding their annual coin drop on Saturday, May 23 along Main Street.

At 7:52 p.m., Carl Russell made the motion to enter Executive Session to discuss personnel issues, seconded by Lisa Hill, and unanimously carried. Keith Arlund was the only person remaining with the Board. No minutes were kept. The Board reconvened at 7:58 p.m.

At 8:00 PM, Lisa Hill made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Carl Russell, and unanimously carried.

Bill Hall

Carl Russell

Lisa Hill