

Minutes of the July 23, 2012 Meeting of the Board of Selectmen.

Present: Neal Fox, Joe De Freitas, Bill Hall, Delbert Cloud, Abbie Sherman, Geneva Gaiko, Mary Floyd, Laura Rubenis, Nick Nikolaidis, Heidi Nikolaidis, David Sambor, David Griffin, Wendall Benoir, Susan Fedak, Forrest Griffin, Dick Adams, Newt Whitcomb, Kevin Flynn, 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 first matter in the order of the agenda was provision of opportunity for public comment or inquiry.

Mary Floyd informed the Board that she and others are working on the plan for a "community festival" to be held on Saturday, September 22, 2012. She listed various activities which are envisioned as part of the program, many of which will require use of Town property, streets and sidewalks. Further details will be shared as they are developed, but Ms. Floyd wished to know if the Board would approve the concept as perceived at this time. Motion to support the project and approve use of Town properties for the purpose was made by Bill Hall, seconded by Joe De Freitas and unanimously carried.

Laura Rubenis informed the Board that she has been trying to schedule a "Community Emergency Response Team" training for September 18th and 19th at the Town Hall. However, it was noted that the Town has not been advised by Vermont Emergency Management that an approved training program can be held at that time in Bethel, and question arose as to whether the training being scheduled for "East Central Vermont" communities at Vermont Technical College is intended to include the community of Bethel. ("CERT" teams are trained, equipped, insured, and in general supported by Vermont Emergency Management through the Local Emergency Planning Committees.) It was thus left that Ms. Rubenis would consult further with her Vermont Emergency Management contacts and request that entity to confirm what training opportunities are available. Delbert Cloud noted that the Selectboard has sought to schedule a local training opportunity, and has advertised the possibility in the "Herald of Randolph," with the expectation that people interested in helping the Town with emergency preparedness will register with the Town Office.

Laura Rubenis then said she had a set of questions on behalf of Lisa Campbell and the Parks and Public Places Committee, which she then verbally listed. Several of the matters relate to contracted work, which the Town understands will be completed in the near future such as repair of the bench from Fort Fortitude, electrical repairs at Peavine Park, re-setting of the porta-potty at Peavine Park, completion of fencing at Peavine Park and the adjoining well house. Regarding repair of the stone wall by Avon Drive, Chairman Fox advised that the Town had obtained cost estimates from qualified contractors to rebuild the wall, but had found the cost to be well beyond budget provisions. This would have to be considered as a capital project in the next budget cycle if it is to be furthered.

Susan Fedak then explained plans developed by the Bethel Historical Society for a local art show which would be set up at the Town Hall as part of the earlier discussed community festival, and continued on Saturdays thereafter. She requested Selectboard approval for this event, and concurrence that the cost for additional hooks, rods and clips in the amount of \$1,402.49 could be paid by the Town since the installations would remain with the Town Hall. Some monetary return to the Town is also proposed through sale of the art. Motion was made by Joe De Freitas to approve the event and utilize the Town Hall Fund to cover the referenced installation cost, this being seconded by Bill Hall and unanimously carried.

As the time was then 6:30 PM, Chairman Fox opened a public discussion on the subject of the former Town gravel pit on Peavine Boulevard being used as a firing range, this being the first scheduled appointment for the evening. Chairman Fox initially explained research he has done through various resources around the State as a whole, many communities presently addressing the same subject matter. Through the ensuing discussion, it appeared that a consensus exists on a number of points: the area could be

one of the safest places for people to fire guns if properly set up, much safer than other places which might otherwise be used if the use of the pit were denied; the adjoining land owned by the Haikara family would have to be considered in conjunction with the Town property; most people are not opposed to use of the pit for sighting firearms used for hunting, but are opposed to use of rapid fire weapons or very loud weapons which are perceived to be primarily recreational shooting; firing at trap or skeet targets wherein shotguns are discharged into the air should be reviewed in terms of location and direction of firing; prescribed hours for use of weapons in the pit might help avoid conflicts with other activities of neighbors and families. It was determined that Chairman Fox would seek further input from qualified sources to evaluate safety and usage issues; he requested assistance from 3 or 4 interested people to help gather information. Forrest Griffin and Dick Adams agreed to help.

With the time then being 7:25 PM, a brief recess was taken before commencement of the second appointment scheduled for 7:30 PM, this being a review of rates being charged for use of the Town Hall, inclusive of the rental rate for the Bethel Historical Society. Mary Floyd initially provided a data sheet setting forth various goals and objectives, which also included recommended rental rates for interval use of the Hall, and proposed membership to a Town Hall Committee. Abbie Sherman provided records of scheduled uses from the calendar she keeps, and Delbert Cloud provided income and expense data for the year ended June 30, 2012. Neal Fox asked if the proposed schedule of rates would eliminate need for the Selectboard to review applications for use of the Hall and waive/reduce rates; it was agreed that use of the proposed schedule would relieve the Selectboard of that responsibility. It was also confirmed that Bethel Town and Bethel School District events would be scheduled with no rental fee. After due discussion, motion was made by Joe De Freitas to approve the proposed rental fee schedule and appoint Mary Floyd, Nick Nikolaidis, and David Sambor as members of the Town Hall Committee to work in partnership with the Selectboard on identified endeavors; this motion was seconded by Bill Hall and unanimously carried. It was further agreed in response to question from Nick Nikolaidis that the new rates would be effective immediately, and fees would be adjusted for any pending reservations. Monthly rental rate for the Bethel Historical Society was then discussed. Neal Fox indicated he might consider lowering the rate to \$200 per month if it could be reviewed in a year to gauge its appropriateness. It was suggested by Joe De Freitas that lowering the rate could assist the Historical Society in stimulating greater activity at the Town Hall which would benefit everybody. Bill Hall suggested that the review should be conducted in 6 months rather than 1 year. After due discussion, motion was made by Joe De Freitas to set the rate at \$200 per month for one year starting September 2012 with the intent of evaluating the status of matters in 6 months for informational purposes, this motion being seconded by Bill Hall and unanimously carried.

Turning then to the order of the agenda, the minutes of the Selectboard meeting of July 9, 2012 were approved by motion of Bill Hall, seconded by Joe De Freitas and unanimously carried. The Planning Commission minutes of July 18, 2012 were reviewed and placed on file; it was agreed that Delbert Cloud should discuss the membership level for the Planning Commission with the Commission Chair, Andrew Delaney. The Recreation Committee minutes of July 16, 2012 were next reviewed and placed on file. Abbie Sherman explained the community survey form re. recreation amenities/needs which the Recreation Committee has prepared, and it was agreed that this would be excellent information to gather.

Delbert Cloud summarized feed-back from property owners on Pleasant Street northerly of the Fire Station and on Watershed Road re. possible provision of alternative water supplies. Most have responded to an inquiry from the Town and have indicated willingness to consider options. It was agreed that Delbert Cloud should make contact again with the few that did not respond, and the Board would schedule time at a future meeting to prepare a proposal for subject property owners to consider.

Delbert Cloud next reported on two forthcoming projects, one being the AOT Enhancement Grant project for pedestrian facilitations on Church Street, North Main Street, and the intersection area on Main Street, and the other being Vermont Agency of Transportation plans for paving on Route 12 inclusive of the Town's class 1 highway.

Interests of the Town were identified for both projects, and these will be forwarded to appropriate parties.

Delbert Cloud then updated the Board on matters associated with recovery work stemming from Tropical Storm Irene. Most projects involving public infrastructure are completed, although no final FEMA or Federal Highway audits have been completed for “large projects” (over \$63,900.00) of which the Town has many. For the most part, the Town has remaining a hazard mitigation project for the Water Department for which approval to proceed is pending, and contracted engineers are working on plans/permits for bridges. The Town is still waiting for authorization to proceed with certain “individual assistance” projects in the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Buy-out Program, and the Department of Agriculture Emergency Watershed Protection Program.

The following communications were next reviewed and placed on file: (1) a July 16, 2012 request for information from the American Red Cross, (2) a response from Governor Shumlin to the Board’s letter of concern over the quality of communication services proffered in the area, (3) a letter of “thanks” from Gary and Lisa Alexander, (4) stream-water sampling reports for July 11, 2012 submitted by the White River Partnership, (5) notice of the “point to point” fundraising event for benefit of the Vermont Foodbank, (6) an informational letter from the Vermont League of Cities & Towns re. marijuana dispensaries, and (7) a July 17, 2012 letter from Laura Rubenis expressing her interest in serving on the Planning Commission. The Board also reviewed the minutes of the Parks and Public Spaces Committee of July 17, 2012, these having been received at the Town Office on July 23, 2012.

A request from the Board of Listers was then discussed, this being an error on the part of the Board of Listers for a value on the Grand List which should have been changed for Linda Shekinah’s property. Motion to concur with the Board of Listers recommendation was made by Joe De Freitas, seconded by Bill Hall and unanimously carried.

The Board members concurred that a letter of support should be prepared for the “Senior Living” facility being proposed in Randolph Center by Gifford Medical Center. Delbert Cloud will prepare such letter for the Board members’ signatures.

In consideration of the joint Selectboard committee being formed by Bethel and Royalton to evaluate the structure of the program, it was agreed that Neal Fox and Joe De Freitas would represent the Bethel Board.

With no further business to attend, the motion was made at 10:40 PM by Bill Hall to adjourn to Wednesday, July 25, 2012 at 7:00 PM at the Bethel Town Office to meet in joint session with the Royalton Selectboard re. business of the solid waste program; this motion was seconded by Joe De Freitas and unanimously carried.

Neal Fox

Joe De Freitas

Bill Hall