

**DRAFT**  
**Minutes of Bethel Town Meeting Solutions Committee**  
**January 6, 2015 at Town Clerk's Office**

**Present:** Rick Benson, Jean Burnham, Davis Dimock, Lucien Hinkle, Rebecca Stone, Lisa McCrory and Victoria Weber.

Rick called the meeting to order at 2:02pm and the minutes of the past 2 meetings were approved.

We discussed which of the Recommendations to the Select Board that we had submitted to their December 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting we had clear answers on. For the most part the Board was agreeable to many of our recommendations, especially about graphics in the Town Report, which Abbie Sherman is already working on, the roving microphones and having students on our committee. We are still not sure what the Capital Plan/Program covers, and we are anxious to see the summary version of it that has been mentioned. Lucien is particularly concerned about the town's debt. Jean said the bank has provided a summary of all debts and payment plans with them.

We created a list of 8 questions that are not clear for their January 12<sup>th</sup> meeting. We would like the answers to these so we can know whether we can mention them in the Town Report on the page we have developed to let citizens know 'What to Expect at Town Meeting 2015'. [We are calling this 'page 3'.] Deadlines for the Report are pushing us all to clarify these issues.

**Pre-town meeting:** Davis handed out copies of a Valley News article on a pre-town meeting in Hartford. We will share this with the Select Board. The main reasons we like the idea of holding some sort of opportunity for people to ask questions about the Town Report, the budget, and the warned items are: People can learn from the questions others ask, and the resulting answers. Also follow-up questions from another person may further explain a situation. Secondly, people like to have some time to think about what they learned before they have to vote on items. An opportunity for a group to ask questions a week or so before Town Meeting would accomplish this.

**Evaluation forms:** Rebecca will set up a draft form on line with enough information so that we can include the link on 'page 3'. We also want to use the bottom of the Roger's Rules handout as a paper evaluation form at town meeting itself.

**Childcare:** Rick will investigate offering childcare through the EXCEL program at the school

**Exhibits:** Non-profit, community groups, including town committees, are encouraged to have exhibits at the back of the gym, or in the hall behind it. People would probably need to bring their own table, or coordinate with John Hubble, head of maintenance at the school. We will include Jean Burnham's name and # on 'page 3' for people to check with on exhibiting.

**Coordination with the School**

Lisa made a presentation at the school staff meeting January 5th, and Rick attended as well. Lisa handed out a copy of the current draft of our 'page 3' to the teachers and staff. The only question at the end was 'will the same thing be happening for the school board meeting?'

Victoria shared a Dec. 22<sup>nd</sup> email from School Board Chair Kristin LaFromboise who is interested in seeing how our 2 meetings can be connected, and in getting students involved. Also they would like to increase attendance at the school meeting, just as we would like to increase the quantity and quality of attendance at town meeting. Kirstin has invited us to the school board's January 19<sup>th</sup> meeting to share our plans. [As of 1-10-15 Rick and Lisa will both attend.]

### **Front Porch Forum**

Victoria will post the *Notes from the December 11<sup>th</sup> Town Meeting Forum*.

We'd like to have frequent little postings, perhaps each week until town meeting, explaining some aspect of it, and perhaps anonymous profiles of why people do or don't attend town meeting. We'd like to share the fact that state law allows anyone to attend town meeting, and Jean would like people to know that what their property taxes are is decided at town meeting, and they can have input into this. Not only will this get information out about town meeting, but it may make the Front Porch Forum more interesting, and therefore more used. Long term, the Front Porch Forum is a great way to build community.

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 pm.

**Our next meeting will be Tuesday, January 20<sup>th</sup> at 3:30 pm at the Town Clerk's Office.**

**NOTE THE CHANGE OF TIME FROM 2:00pm TO 3:30 pm.**

Minutes by Victoria Weber, Secretary, 1-10-15