

Minutes of the December 19, 2011 Meeting of the Board of Selectmen.

Present: Neal Fox, Bill Richards, Joe De Freitas, Delbert Cloud, Geneva Gaiko, Ola O'Dell, Louise Ferris-Burt, William Hall, David Sambor, Laura Rubenis, Valdis Rubenis, Nick Nikolaidis, Heidi Nikolaidis, and Lisa Hill.

The meeting was called to order at 6:10 PM by Chairman Neal Fox. Chairman Fox asked if members of the public wished to speak regarding any particular subject matter, prior to the Board proceeding with the order of the agenda.

Lisa Hill said she has concerns regarding the "boil water" notification procedure used by the Town in providing public notice about the recent finding of coliform in the water supply system. She acknowledged that her daughter, now owning a property on Church Street only since Monday of last week, is not yet on local (Town) mailing lists and that it is not surprising that she would not have received the direct mailing notice. However, she has two elderly friends who did not receive the notice either; she asked for clarification of what the Town's procedure was. Delbert Cloud assured everyone present that anyone receiving a water bill should have received the notice in the mail. Additionally, the notice was posted at the Town Offices and downtown at Central Market's bulletin board, announced over radio station 1320 in Randolph, and entered on the Town of Bethel's facebook page. It is understood that these measures exceed the minimum regulatory notice requirements. No E. coli or fecal coliform were detected.

Ola O'Dell said she doesn't use the computer that often. She listens to public radio but not other stations, thus suggesting she was not well-served by the procedure.

William Hall observed that many water customers use water differently, in that some are accountable to many others as is the case with restaurants, apartments, businesses, etc. These "primary users" should be contacted directly by phone, and a phone tree needs to be developed for others to receive notice since the Town probably can't call every customer.

Louise Ferris-Burt said a family member with a health concern should not have to wait for notification, and she agreed a phone tree should be developed.

Lisa Hill expressed her support for use of a phone tree, and encouraged use of a Bethel web page as well as a television station.

Laura Rubenis said the Town should also use the other facebook page.

William Hall suggested the Town should develop its own web page which could then be used for public notices.

The Selectboard expressed receptivity to the ideas given, and advised that it would be happy to add any form of notice, as doing so would not be a big problem.

Louise Ferris-Burt said the Town's form of notice was horrible, and she could not understand why six different samplings were done before a notice was even issued. Delbert Cloud clarified that the notice is not produced by the Town; it is provided to the Town and is the required form of notice to meet state and federal requirements. The Town did not do six separate samplings on different dates – when the first sample showed coliform present, a barrage of five were taken all on the same date.

Cloud then asked for specific direction as to how future public notices of this type are to be done. The following measures were set forth: television, public radio, direct calling to a list of "primary users," and setting up a phone tree. (It is assumed that notice should still be posted, placed on the Town's facebook page, and entered on the Town web site when it is available.) It was agreed that the same procedure would be used to advise that the water does not have to be boiled.

At 6:45 PM, the Board then turned to the order of the agenda. The minutes of the December 12, 2011 meeting of the Board of Selectmen were approved by motion of

Joe De Freitas, seconded by Bill Richards and unanimously carried. A December 14, 2012 letter from Rob Evans, National Flood Insurance Program Coordinator for the Department of Environmental Conservation was distributed to the Board members. It was agreed that the survey requested should be completed by the Zoning Administrative Officer.

Delbert Cloud reported that two property owners will be assisted in making flood repairs through the NRCS Emergency Watershed Protection program. Bids for performance of the work have been received, and contractors are awaiting permission to start from the program engineer.

With respect to the FEMA Home Buy-out program, several property owners have expressed interest, and Cloud expects the letters of intent will be filed with FEMA later this week. The deadline for filing is December 30, 2011.

Most of the repair work has been done on the water system infrastructure, but the current problem with coliform bacteria is considered to be in all likelihood a consequence of the flood event. With respect to the wastewater system, two matters remain problematic. The first matter is the need to cover and protect the siphon intake piping at the Bethel Mills pump station, these having been scoured out by the flood event. Bids are due from contractors on Thursday, December 22nd at 2:00 PM. The second concern is with respect to the fact that the agricultural fields used by the Town for land application of biosolids have been both badly eroded and covered with debris. The owner, the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife, has not yet concluded on what basis, if any, restoration will be done, or if the state will again lease the land for use by the Town.

Drafts of fiscal year 2013 budgets for the Water Department, the Wastewater Department, and the Solid Waste program were briefly examined. These will be finalized at a later date, no action being required or taken at this time by the Board.

The proposed Windsor County Budget for fiscal year 2013 was also reviewed and placed on file. It was noted that a hearing on the proposed budget will be held on December 22, 2011.

The Board then reviewed a proposal for provision of software to help develop a web site, this being from GovOffice Web Solutions. The pricing reflected a discount due to the fact that the company has a partnership with the Vermont League of Cities & Towns. Delbert Cloud recommended that the Town acquire the program inclusive of the optional features, most of the optional features being one-time only expenses. After due consideration, motion was made by Joe De Freitas to acquire the program as recommended by the Manager, this motion being seconded by Bill Richards and unanimously carried.

Under "other business," Ola O'Dell said she was personally insulted by the message on the Town's answering machine because it only provided the hours of operation which everyone should know anyway. She believes it should provide telephone numbers to call when an emergency is at hand. After due discussion, it was agreed that no change would be made because Town officials can quite readily be called, 911 should be dialed for truly life-threatening matters, and no one was able to specify an instance wherein options not already available were even needed.

Delbert Cloud informed the Board that the State of Vermont Agency of Transportation is planning to have a "celebration" on December 29th to mark the completion of repairs on Vermont State Route 107 in Stockbridge. The Board has been asked if it might have any suggestions or requests to make regarding the event. It was agreed that Town of Stockbridge officials should take the lead on this matter. The Bethel Board members will consider the event and advise the Town Manager of any recommendations.

Joe De Freitas reported that no information has yet been forthcoming about a debris removal project. Although meeting(s) have been held by State of Vermont officials and federal representatives, no conclusions have apparently been made. He expects the Town Manager's office may receive information at some point.

Neal Fox advised that he had two issues he wished to discuss in executive session, one pertaining to an employee's job performance and the other pertaining to contract negotiation with another Town. At 8:10 PM the motion was made by Joe De Freitas to enter executive session for these reasons, this motion being seconded by Bill Richards and unanimously carried. Delbert Cloud was the only person remaining with the Board during the executive session. No minutes were kept. Upon return to open meeting at 9:00 PM, the only motion was to adjourn, this being made by Bill Richards, seconded by Joe De Freitas and unanimously carried.

Neal Fox

Bill Richards

Joe De Freitas