

Bethel Town Meeting Committee
Minutes of February 9, 2015 Meeting

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

Rick called the meeting to order at 3:49pm.

The committee approved the minutes of the past 2 meetings, January 6th and 20th as written.

Committee Name change

At their January 26, 2015 meeting the Selectboard removed the word 'solutions' from the name of our committee because that word seemed to imply there are problems with our town meeting. While there was a problem with access to the town hall, this was solved last year by streamlining check-in and addressing parking issues. The Committee accepted the Board's suggestion now that we have solved access problems by implementing streamlined check-in procedures and addressing parking issues. The committee accepts the idea that our basic goals are to make town meeting more engaging and efficient.

Evaluation/Survey

We proofed the 10-question survey that that Rebecca had compiled. We intend to offer it to citizens in a handout at town meeting and simultaneously online. The Selectboard had reviewed the questions and asked that we remove the phrase in the introduction "and could make it better", which implied there was a problem. We are happy to do this.

We will offer small 'incentives' for people to fill in the survey in the form of a raffle to receive small gift certificates from some Bethel businesses. Davis pledged a \$25 donation toward this, and Neil Brooks offered to solicit town businesses for donations. People who want to be in the drawing can fill in a separate piece of paper with their name and contact info so that their name is kept separate from their responses, thus guaranteeing the anonymity of their answers.

A motion was made and approved to receive surveys in either format from citizens until March 17th. We will then compile the responses and give them to the Selectboard, and post them on the Front Porch Forum and possibly in a letter to the editor of *The Herald*.

We plan to use the responses to provide information to the Selectboard and the Town Meeting Committee to facilitate discussion about Bethel's future.

Child Care

The EXCEL after school program will provide free childcare at town meeting.

News from the School

Neil reported some students are interested in seeing the school budgetary information in the town report as they are concerned about teachers being let go due to the consolidation of supervisory districts. An article will appear in the school newsletter about Neil being a member of our committee. We hope that will generate a few student volunteers to carry the roving

microphone. If not we will ask specific students. We are looking for a second student to join our committee.

The school board is planning on having some of the same things that we are offering for town meeting. They will have child care, but by the PTA, not EXCEL after school program. They will have free pie and the roving microphones.

Robert's Rules handout

Lisa has typed up a version of the brief explanation of Robert's Rules of Order that Middlesex uses. We have made a few additions and changes and the Selectboard offered to have them copied for us.

Exhibits

Bethel University has already contacted Jean about having an exhibit. Victoria read the text of the second 'Town Meeting Notes' that she is writing for the Front Porch Forum to publicize the things we are offering at town meeting. Rebecca will post these on the Bethel community Facebook page.

Publicity

Rick has finished a poster based on our informational page from the Town Report. It will be posted at the school and around town. Rick will also draft a letter to the editor of the *Herald* for the Feb. 19th issue. We will try to get it published in the *Valley News* as well.

Victoria is drafting a series of informational 'notes' for the Front Porch Forum. The first was on the state law which allows workers (and students) to attend town meeting if they give their supervisor a week's notice (not 2 weeks as we had thought). Upcoming notes will be on location of town meeting. Childcare, the survey, the opportunity to ask questions about the Town Report at the Feb 23rd Selectboard meeting, free pie and cheese and roving microphones.

Our next meetings will be February 24th at 3 pm, and then March 23rd, Monday, at 3:30 pm.

The meeting adjourned at 5:15pm.

Minutes by Victoria Weber, Secretary 2-10-15