

Minutes of January 25, 2016 Regular Select Board Meeting.

Present: Board Members Bill Hall, Carl Russell and Lisa Hill. Others present: Town Manager Keith Arlund, Assistant Town Manager Abbie Sherman, Mary Floyd, Geneva Gaiko, Ele Griffin, Rick Benson, Jim Distefano, Jamie Coogler, and Fran Robinson.

Chairman Hall called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Public Comment:

1. Rick Benson was present on behalf of the Town Meeting Committee to announce the committee's intent to hold a potluck and forum on Thursday, February 11, 6 to 8 p.m., at the Bethel Town Hall to discuss the articles on the Town Warning regarding increasing to a 5 member Selectboard. He invited the Selectboard members to attend.
2. Jim Distefano, a former Bethel resident, was present to request a waiver or reduction in the Town Hall rental fee for a fundraising event he planned to hold there on January 30 to help him to raise funds due to the loss of his home in December. The normal rental fee for a nonresident is \$250. Hall inquired of Sherman whether a waiver had been given before for this type of event. To her recollection, it had not. Russell felt that waiving the fee was appropriate, as did Hill. Hill advised that the cleaning deposit and other provisions would remain in place. Hall had concerns that Distefano was not a Bethel resident and the fundraising event was not beneficial to Bethel in some way. Hill suggested that the Board develop protocols at a future meeting. Carl Russell made the motion to waive the rental fee for the fundraiser, seconded by Lisa Hill. Bill Hall did not concur. The motion passed.

Appointments:

1. Mary Floyd re. Addition of Members to the Community Forward Festival Committee. Floyd introduced to the Board to Jamie Coogler and Fran Robinson. Coogler and Robinson have been attending committee meetings and wished to become members. Motion to appoint Jamie Coogler and Fran Robinson to the Community Forward Festival Committee was made by Lisa Hill, seconded by Carl Russell, and unanimously carried.
2. Ele Griffin re. the Recreation Committee's Grant Application for Skate Park. Griffin gave the Board a brief history of the progression of the skate park. She advised that the Recreation Committee was seeking the Board's approval to apply to the Philip Levesque Memorial grant for \$1,000. There is no match requirement. Total cost of the concrete base for the skate park is estimated to be \$45,000. The committee intends to supplement the Levesque grant, if awarded, with funds from the Recreation Facility Improvement Fund and other fundraising and grants. Hall advised that he did not believe there would be enough in the Recreation Fund, based on the timeline in the proposal, to provide the additional funds for the project. It won't be known until after Town Meeting how much is available. Hall advised that the committee research additional grants and develop a timeline for additional funding. Hall further advise that Griffin coordinate with Sherman to prepare a final version of the Levesque grant proposal for the Board to review at their February 8 meeting.

Reports, Motions, and Ordinances:

1. Matters Associated with Town Meeting and the Annual Report:
 - a. Warning for Town Meeting. Hall stated his disappointment that Town Meeting was not being held at the Town Hall this year. Hall also advised that he does not believe the Town will be better served by increasing the size of the Selectboard. He based this on his experience in serving on the Woodstock Selectboard (a 3 member board) and as a municipal employee for the Town of Hartford. When the Hartford board increased to 5 members, they became dysfunctional; when they increased to 7 members, it became increasingly difficult to get matters resolved. Russell felt that the number of members was immaterial to the structure of the Board. The difficulty he face with a 3-member Board is their inability to discuss Town matters outside of a meeting. Hill referred to the Open Meeting Law, which provides for the Board to conduct Town business with all parties taking part. Eric Benson requested clarification of the articles relating to the addition of Selectboard members. Benson will return at the February 22 meeting to further discuss the Warning and matters associated with Town Meeting. Motion to approve the Warning for Town Meeting was made by Lisa Hill, seconded by Carl Russell, and unanimously carried.

- b. Final Review of Annual Report and Budgets. Hall had provided minor edits to the Town Budget Summary page to Sherman prior to the meeting pertaining to items such as the culvert and road inventory programs. The only change to the budget was Arlund's increase of Constable wages to provide for additional hours.
2. Discussion re. Bethel/Royalton Solid Waste Program. Minutes of the most recent Bethel/Royalton Solid Waste Board meeting had been provided to the Board. Arlund advised of his concerns regarding structure and management of the program. Since they border on personnel matters, he would discuss this further with the Board during executive session.
3. Approval of Revised Delinquent Tax Collection Policy. The policy now includes the acceptance of postmarks for the quarterly tax and utility payments. Motion to approve the revised policy was made by Lisa Hill, seconded by Carl Russell, and unanimously carried.
4. Town Manager's Report:
 - a. Update on VT-Alert. Arlund advised the Board that the Emergency Planning Committee had met with Randy Bronson of DEMHS to discuss VT-Alert. VT-Alert will allow the Town to send out town-specific notifications of emergencies, hazards, and other important public safety announcements. Bethel will be online with the system March 1, 2016. It was noted that the system is not meant for social items. Set up of the system required submittal of a list of "notifiers" approved by the Selectboard. Motion to authorize Bill Hall as Chair to endorse the letter to Vermont DEMHS to implement VT-Alert was made by Carl Russell, seconded by Lisa Hill, and unanimously carried.
 - b. Status Update of Action Items.
 - i. Arlund advised that the tax sale date has been set for February 9 at 1 p.m. Total number of properties is down to 5. Arlund asked the Board whether the Town would bid on properties that bidders are not interested in. Hall advised the advantage to this would be that the clock starts on the redemption period. The Board will revisit the matter at their February 8 meeting.
 - ii. Arlund has completed interviews for the Constable position. He will discuss his recommendation with the Board during executive session.
 - iii. Arlund has asked that the Town be put on the DWSRF Priority List for potential access to loans should the Board decide to move forward with installation of water meters or other water infrastructure needs.

Minutes and Communications:

1. Selectboard Minutes of January 11, 2016. Motion by Lisa Hill, seconded by Carl Russell, and unanimously carried to approve the January 11, 2016 Selectboard minutes.
2. Committee Minutes. The Board acknowledged receipt of: (1) December 16, 2015 Planning Commission minutes; (2) notice of cancellation of the January 12, 2016 Conservation Commission meeting; (3) January 13, 2016 Recreation Committee minutes; and (4) January 11, 2016 Community Forward Festival minutes.
3. Other Communications. Arlund provided the Board with information regarding emergency management "Preparathon." This is an exercise that would be held on September 30, 2016 with assistance from Vermont Emergency Management. Arlund further advised the Board that Bethel Fire Chief David Aldrighetti would like to hold a larger meeting with the Board to discuss roles in the event of a disaster.

Any Other Business Necessary to Come Before the Board: There were no other discussion items.

Executive Session to Discuss Personnel Matters. At 7:02 PM, Lisa Hill made the motion to enter executive session to discuss personnel matters, seconded by Carl Russell, and unanimously carried.

The Board came out of executive session at 7:55 PM with no action taken. Motion to adjourn was made at 7:58 PM by Lisa Hill, seconded by Carl Russell, and unanimously carried.

Bill Hall

Carl Russell

Lisa Hill