BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Clifford J. Hurgin Municipal Center, 1 School Street
Bethel, Connecticut 06801 Telephone: (203) 794-8501

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TOWN OF BETHEL
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Matthew S. Knickerbocker, First Selectman
Richard C. Straiton, Selectman
Paul R. Szatkowski, Selectman

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

Tuesday, January 20, 2015
7:30 p.m.
CJH Municipal Center – Meeting Room "A"

PRESENT: First Selectman Knickerbocker, Selectman Straiton and Selectman Szatkowski. Also in attendance was Town Counsel Martin Lawlor.

Call to order/Pledge of Allegiance: First Selectman Knickerbocker called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Public Comments: Thomas Galliford (Chief SHFD) and Fred Ingram (BFD)

Correspondence: Noted – letter to Police Commission regarding the Police Station project.

Minutes of January 6, 2015: Selectman Straiton made a motion, which was seconded by Selectman Szatkowski, to approve the minutes as presented. Vote, all in favor, motion unanimously approved.

First Selectman Report – Selectmen commended the Highway Departments and the Fire Departments for their due diligence with the recent Ice Storm. Selectman Straiton advised that the Youth Commission has met and have recommended an architect to work on drawings for the Teen Center.

First Selectman Knickerbocker made a motion, which was seconded by Selectman Straiton, to add to tonight's agenda – New Business, Item # 5 - Resolution – Main Street Investment Fund Program Grant Award. Vote, all in favor, motion unanimously approved.

Old Business

1.) Consideration of LOSAP (Length of Service Award Program)

SHFD Chief Tom Galliford and BFD Chief Fred Ingram requested that the names on the list be reviewed a final time as there may be some discrepancies in several dates of birth and years of service. Both expressed the desire to meet with the Selectmen to resolve the issue.

First Selectman Knickerbocker explained that after considerable investigation into this issue, it was discovered that since its initial inception by the Board of Selectmen, the plan owner was improperly changed from the "Town of Bethel" to "BVFD". Amendments had been made to the LOSAP plan by various fire department members without informing the Board of Selectmen or obtaining approval by the Board of Selectmen; this caused a substantial increase to the cost of the plan. Several years back, the former Comptroller discovered this and stopped payment to the company and transferred funds to the town pension management company. The LOSAP plan had been put on hold. The town actuarial firm had prepared several scenarios for the Board of Selectmen to consider. Board of Selectmen members were provided these and will review and discuss at an upcoming meeting. (*as noted in the Board of Selectmen meeting minutes of December 9, 2014*)

The Board of Selectmen explained that this was not a situation that they have created; this goes back many years, but that they have been working for over four years to resolve this which would provide a benefit to the members who have served. However, the cost to provide this benefit is very expensive due to the amendments that were made to the plan; these amendments were instituted by the Fire Departments but not ever authorized by the town. First Selectman Knickerbocker advised that there are two scenarios – the cost to fund the initial program (without the unauthorized amendments) would be $284,299 (total unfunded liability), the cost to fund the program (with the unauthorized amendments) would be $583,380 (total unfunded liability). It was pointed out that this does not provide any benefit to new members, only existing members enrolled in the initial VFIS plan and that those amounts do not reflect the normal annual payment. FD representatives believe that there were payments made to VFIS for the initial cost of the amendments and will check their records to see if this can be verified. It was pointed out, however, that even if payments were made directly to VFIS by the fire companies, that would not lessen the unfunded liability for the program.

Selectman Straiton requested the cost to increase the term life insurance from $15,000 to $20,000 be explored.

Selectman Straiton made a motion, which was seconded by Selectman Szatkowski, to table the LOSAP and authorize Town Counsel Martin Lawlor to draft an amendment which would provide a monthly benefit to vested members of $300 per month at age 65. Vote, all in favor, motion unanimously approved.

New Business

1.) Consideration of appointments to the following boards, committees & commissions

First Selectman Knickerbocker made a motion, which was seconded by Selectman Straiton, to re-appoint the following:

Ethics Commission – To re-appoint John Kelly (R) to the Ethics Commission

Insurance & Pension – To reappoint George Braden (R), Edward Tomasko, Jr. (R) and Thomas O'Leary (D) to the Insurance & Pension Commission

Public Site & Building – To reappoint John Perna (U), Deno Gualtierei (R) and James Palmer (R) to the Public Site & Building Committee.

Youth Commission – To reappoint Robert Korin (U) and Kristin Nauheimer (R) to the Youth Commission.

Vote, all in favor, motion unanimously approved.

First Selectman Knickerbocker made a motion, which was seconded by Selectman Straiton, to table appointments to the Commission on Aging, Cable Advisory, Economic Development Commission, Housing Authority and the Youth Commission Alternate position. Vote, all in favor, motion unanimously approved.

2.) Consideration of disbanding the following boards, committees & Commissions

First Selectman Knickerbocker made a motion, which was seconded by Selectman Straiton, to disband the following boards, committees & commissions:

Franc Property	Affordable Housing Task Force	Ad-Hoc Track and Field
Economic Outreach	Bethel Skate Park	Citizen Advisory (NU/CL&P)
Transportation Advisory		

Vote, all in favor, motion unanimously approved.

The Charter Revision Commission ceases to exist when their report is made to the Board of Selectmen and Town Counsel Martin Lawlor will look into the Golf Authority; it may have been created differently, i.e. an ordinance and disbanding would have to take a different route.

3.) Consideration of Tax Collector's request for Tax Refund Authorization

First Selectman Knickerbocker made a motion, which was seconded by Selectman Szatkowski, to approve the Tax Collector's request, dated January 20, 2015 and authorize Tax Refunds in the amount of $298.79. Vote, all in favor, motion unanimously approved.

4.) Consideration of contract – Household Hazardous

First Selectman Knickerbocker made a motion, which was seconded by Selectman Szatkowski, to authorize the First Selectman to sign the Housatonic Resource Recovery Authority (HRRA) Household Hazardous Day Agreement for the operation of a Three Year Household Hazardous Waste Collection Program. Vote, all in favor, motion unanimously approved.

5.) Consideration of Resolution – Main Street Investment Fund Program Grant Award

First Selectman Knickerbocker advised that the State Bonding Counsel approved the funding and requires a resolution attesting to the Town's approval of the funding.

First Selectman Knickerbocker made a motion, which was seconded by Selectman Straiton, that:

Whereas, the legislative body of the Town of Bethel, Connecticut, approved at a Special Town Meeting, duly noticed and held on December 2, 2014, a resolution as recommended by the Bethel Board of Selectmen to accept the State of Connecticut, Main Street Investment Fund Program Grant Award in the amount of Two Hundred Ninety Thousand One Hundred Forty Nine ($290,149.00) Dollars for the Bethel Town Commercial Center Improvement Plan with the Town of Bethel's financial share totaling Thirty Eight Thousand Nine Hundred Thirty Eight ($38,938.00) Dollars consisting of in-kind/contribution-services and cash expenditures by the Town of Bethel.

As there was no further business on tonight's agenda, Selectman Straiton made a motion, which was seconded by Selectman Szatkowski, to adjourn the meeting at 8:53 p.m. Vote, all in favor, motion unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Smith

Wendy Smith, Recording Secretary