

Town of Bethel
Town Council Meeting Minutes
October 3, 2023 – 7:00 p.m.

1. Meeting Called to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by V. Proctor. Present were V. Proctor; M. Shaver; K. Layfield; K. Phillips; and Bethel Town Clerk, M. Hawkins. Secretary, Pat Kough, was absent.

2. Pledge of Allegiance: The Pledge of Allegiance was led by V. Proctor.

3. Secretary's Report: Vern Proctor noted/presented the September 5, 2023 Town Council Meeting Minutes. Mark Shaver made a Motion to accept the September 5, 2023 minutes as presented. Kevin Phillips seconded the Motion. The Motion passed unanimously.

4. Town Clerk's Report: Town Clerk, M. Hawkins, presented the Town Clerk's report. Mark Shaver made a Motion to approve the Town Clerk's report. Kathy Layfield seconded the Motion. The Motion passed unanimously.

5. Treasurer's Report

a. Bills to be Paid: K. Layfield presented the bills to be paid. Mark Shaver made a Motion to pay the bills as presented. Kevin Phillips seconded the Motion. The Motion passed unanimously.

b. Treasurer's Report: K. Layfield presented the September Treasurer's Report.

Mark Shaver made a Motion to approve the September Treasurer's Report as submitted. Kevin Phillips seconded the Motion. The Motion passed unanimously.

6. Building Permits: Wildes – 500 Vine St. \$25; Oakes – 213 School Rd. \$300/Impact fees \$2,987.42.

7. Chipman Property Status: The property went to Settlement and the Witalecs are now the new owners of that property.

Town Clerk provided a Demolition Permit form to the TC members as the Witalecs will need this. Kathy Layfield brought up waiving the fees for this

Demolition; Kevin Phillips advised he felt as the Permit form had not been approved prior to the Chipman Settlement to waive the fees for the Witalecs.

The Town Council decided to vote and approve waiving the Demolition Permit fee for the Witalecs. Kevin Phillips made the Motion to waive the Demolition Permit fee for the Witalecs; Kathy Layfield seconded the Motion. The Motion passed unanimously.

Ed and Debbie Witalec were at the meeting and were very happy with this fee being waived and expressed their thanks.

8. Complaints – Vern Proctor addressed a few of the current active complaints: Building Hazard Inspection Committee will be meeting Sunday afternoon (9/5/23) at the Hopkins house (Main Street) and the Bracken property (West Street);

McCoy properties – Mary McCoy submitted a copy of a proposal for the porch repair on her property;

Vern spoke with Tom McCoy this morning Mr. McCoy said he will definitely fix the noted issues; no more specific information from Mr. McCoy; Vern indicated they would continue to monitor these properties;

One letter responding to a complaint was sent out by the TC in September.

8. Community House – power washing and Generac generator: Mark Shaver received price for power washing of the Community House and was positive the Gazebo could be added to the project; it is scheduled to be done on October 25th for \$575; there were no objections to proceeding with the power washing;

Generac – specs for a 24KW, 100 amp Generator for \$12,702.00 and includes Gas/electric hookups, 3 yr. service, back-up battery; will be put on a cement pad; will be paid out of the ARPA funds. Kevin Phillips made a Motion to purchase the Generac Generator as submitted. Kathy Layfield seconded the Motion; The Motion passed unanimously.

9. Ordinance Committee – speed limits: Public reading for changes to Chapter 4, Sec. 4-3 was done on September 18 regarding correcting the speed limits to 15 mph where appropriate. Kathy Layfield made a Motion to approve the changes to Chapter 4, Sec. 4-3 of the Ordinances; Mark Shaver seconded the Motion. The Motion passed unanimously.

10. TV, computer hookup for Community House: The TV, computer hookup is rescheduled for October 5, 2023.

11. Neighborhood Watch: This was moved to the November Agenda so full Council can discuss;

12. Old/New Business: Upcoming events at the Community House - Mark Shaver advised there will be a Pot Luck dinner on October 20 at 6:30 pm; knitting class on October 21 from 10-2; BHS Fall Craft Show on November 25, and the Tree Lighting and a Town Dinner on December 1 (these will be added to the digital sign when appropriate);

Feral Cats: Moved to the November Agenda.

Christmas Cards: Clerk Martha Hawkins asked for approval to proceed with ordering of the town Christmas cards (110). Kathy Layfield made a Motion to purchase the Christmas cards. Mark Shaver seconded the Motion. The Motion passed unanimously.

A resident inquired about the possibility of removing the digital sign as Bethel now “looks like every other town”; the resident inquired about turning off the sign at night – this is already being done. The resident thought it should be placed at the Store as she felt it was obtrusive. Resident was advised most comments have been positive regarding the sign. Vern Proctor advised the “pros have it” regarding the sign.

Councilperson Layfield brought up discussion about making changes/tweaking the process for responding to Complaints. Ms. Layfield advised the following:

“It was brought to my attention that a resident (not a Council member) mentioned at a Council meeting they had seen a submitted complaint form. No resident should have access to that information.

The Town Council at a recent meeting named a resident that had made a formal complaint. I have mentioned several times that it is bad form to announce the names of Complainant at a public meeting. This practice exposes the resident to retaliation. It also discourages residents to exercise their right to make complaints.

I believe this practice is unprofessional and violates the confidential relationship between the Council and the resident. The matter could be referred to the Town Solicitor and I urge the Council to do that. Regardless of the legality, it is poor form.” This will be moved to the November Agenda so TC can discuss.

13. Adjourn Meeting: The meeting was ad