



Office of Board of Selectmen

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Selectmen's Meeting Minutes

Monday, January 3, 2022, 10:00 a.m.

Belmont Mill, Tioga Meeting Room

Chairman Ruth Mooney called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Also present were Selectman Jon Pike, Selectman Claude Patten, Jr., TA Jeanne Beaudin, Assistant TA Alicia Jipson, General Assistance Director Donna Cilley, and Police Chief Mark Lewandoski. Present via Zoom was DPW Director Craig Clairmont, Fire Chief Mike Newhall, Sharon Ciampi, and Finance Director Katherine Davis.

Those present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes

Selectman Claude Patten, Jr., moved the minutes of the meeting held on December 20, 2021 as written; seconded by Selectman Jon Pike. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business

Sharon Ciampi- Mrs. Ciampi addressed the Board with interest in increasing the number of members on the Board of Selectmen from 3 member to 5. Sharon expressed that she thinks this is a good idea and wants to know if the Selectmen will support this going forward on the Ballot. Selectman Mooney asked why she felt this was a good idea. Sharon responded that she felt it would increase the demographic in Town Hall and increase more of a presence and would likely encourage more volunteers. There is a lot of new movement at TH with retirements. Selectman Mooney responded back that she has in fact reached out to other communities who do have a 5-member Board and they expressed that they don't feel it works well, and that less gets achieved. This will also put more work for the Town employees as they now have to process more paperwork for handouts. Why fix what is not broken and this is not something that she would support personally. Selectman Patten and Pike both agreed that they would not vote in favor of this proposal this is a small town and it is not needed. Selectman Mooney added that newer residents are still not volunteering, they are not attending meetings in person or via zoom at all, they are not participating. Donna Cilley added comment that the Board asked why you would suggest that we would go from 3 to 5 members. At the juncture that we are at with retirements happening it is contradictory to the reasoning. Jeanne is going to retire and someone new is coming in this is not the time to be making changes. The 1st 3 years of a Selectman coming into the position is a learning curve. You have new individuals trying to learn new positions. It is not the time to add 2 new Selectmen. If ever there was a consideration to add new selectmen now is not the time. Getting them up to speed is a hard process. If someone is not happy with a board member then they need to step up and run against them. From what I have heard we are lucky we have what we have. When things are running smooth, no one runs against them. When not, someone will run against them. I ran for 9 years as a Selectman with a lot of old yankees, I could never imagine running with 5

members. Every year a member is up for re-election, and if someone thinks there is a need for change then they should run against them. There is a lot to learn. To take out of the box 2 more individuals who know nothing about Town government is a bad idea. It is not the right year nor is it the right decision for the Town of Belmont and I will rally heavily against it.

PD Grant opportunity- Police Chief Lewandoski discussed that 3 years ago he brought to the Board the potential for a Drug Grant through the AG's Office. The Grant would cover 3 years of an officer's salary, computer, and a vehicle. That grant also has the potential to roll over. We were just notified that the AG's Office did get approved for the grant in 2022, and Belmont was selected as a subrecipient for this grant. It is theoretically a 3- year freebie to us to hire an extra officer. We do have a substantial drug issue in the town and it would be good having someone dedicated to work with individuals in the community as well as work on getting education out into the community, when the officer is not working on drug related cases or with individuals they would be able to work elsewhere in the department where needed. This is something that is a big plus for us. The department is getting overwhelmed with calls. Chief added that come next year he will most likely come to the Board to ask for the ability to hire a 3rd detective, but that this grant would help us cover that. We don't have all of the particulars yet and or anything in writing detailing the grant. Selectman Mooney commented that we haven't received the grant details, and we are unsure if we have to absorb this person after 3 years or can we let them go. Chief responded that his intention would be to look to transfer duties and then hire from outside but again we need to look at the language before we make any decisions. Selectman Patten asked when will you know the language. Chief responded that he knows we were approved and that we are receiving the grant, he just does not have the language and he wants to see that before we accept. TA Beaudin commented that the biggest time constraints that we have is if we have to gross appropriate for the vehicle and the person we need it before the Budget Committee meets so that the Budget Committee can vote on it at their Public Hearing, but in order to know that we would need to know the figures.

Old Business

Police Dept. Revised Budget- TA Beaudin discussed that at the last meeting we discussed the revised salaries for the command staff and made some suggestions on line items that could be reduced to accommodate the new increase in salaries. Overall after the adjustments the budget remains at a 5% increase for a total of \$2,437,942.37 being brought to the Budget Committee for consideration. If the Board is in agreeance it is set to move to the Budget Committee. Selectman Mooney asked Police Chief Lewandoski if he felt comfortable with the amount left in the PT salary line? Chief Lewandoski responded that he has the SRO and Officer Landry who is working on the traffic stops when he can. TA Beaudin added that she has applied for a grant to the Local Department of Justice for around \$47k which would offset these increases in command staff. It will take 2 weeks for these applications to be reviewed. We expect to hear fairly soon. The basis for the application was that wages as a whole have not been adjusted for a cost of living increase due to covid-19 and the crisis. We won't reduce the amount of the budget based on the grant, it will show as an offset. Selectman Mooney expressed again that she was worried that you have 2 employees pulling from this line. Selectman Pike expressed that he thought that we talked about reducing the OT line because the department will be fully staffed. Chief Lewandoski responded that no we discussed keeping the OT line as is because he still has to cover sick, vacation and other coverage. TA Beaudin commented that if you go back and look at the 2020 budget there was only \$46k expended, and you are currently at \$35k, and I think that the \$45k is reasonable.

Exemption for the Disabled- TA Beaudin discussed that through her research on the Disabled Exemption offered in Belknap County there are only a handful of communities who offer the exemption. Alton, Gilmanton, Meredith, Tilton, and Belmont. Belmont and Gilmanton offer \$50,000, Tilton \$50,000, Meredith \$75,000. The amount of our income levels that we require the applicant to be under is right on the money with all the other communities. TA Beaudin did not know if they are proposing any increases but we are right in line with other communities. The board collectively suggested that we keep it where it is, since it seems we are in line with other communities.

Boat Registration- TA Beaudin discussed that Selectman Pike has for a number of years brought to our attention the fact that there is such a disparity in the amount of money that we receive as a community for the boat registrations. Selectman Pike had asked TA Beaudin to reach out to Rep Trottier to bring forward proposed legislation in this upcoming legislative cycle to change the way that boats are valued for the purposes of registrations. It is currently based off of length. We have proposed that it go to the mil rate as we do with car registration. One of the issues that Mr. Trottier brought to TA Beaudin attention was that this was going to reduce the amount of money that towns and cities would get because they will need to pay to adjust the software. TA Beaudin disagreed with that comment and that what we will receive in revenue will far exceed the costs of these upgrades. The only issue that TC/TC Cynthia Deroy and TA Beaudin discussed as potentially a problem is that the state will have to figure out their portion of the taxes. Selectman Pike commented that the state of Maine has the best system for boat registration. We have a lot of registration of boats in NH that do not get housed in NH. This change has to start somewhere. I would like this money earmarked and dedicated to the education system just like the lottery was intended for. TA Beaudin replied that the language currently is not written to go towards the education system, it is written to go back to the towns.

Petition Article- TA Beaudin commented that the Planning Board had received a Petition Warrant Article for a zoning amendment relative to changing the zoning from single family as it is currently zoned rural. This does not go against spot zoning. This article will change the zone to the residential single family which was suggested to the petitioner to do last year but he did not. Selectman Pike recommended that the board of Selectman be in support of the 3 zoning articles. TA Beaudin replied that she knows we can add it to the 3rd article, but she will ask legal if we can add it to the other 2 since they came from the Planning Board. Selectman Patten asked if there is any conflict where Selectman Pike is on the Planning Board and this is coming from the Planning Board. TA Beaudin responded that this will only say that the Board of Selectmen support this recommendation the voters will need to approve.

Non-Public

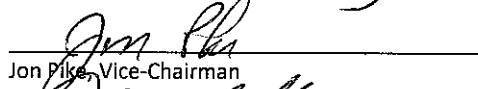
Chairman Mooney moved to enter non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 II (c) at 11:07a.m.; roll call was taken and those present and voting were Jon Pike, Ruth Mooney and Claude Patten. TA Beaudin and ATA Jipson were also present.

Chairman Mooney closed the non-public session at 11:25 a.m.

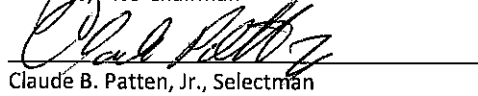
The meeting adjourned at 11:27 a.m.



Ruth P. Mooney, Chairman



Jon Pike, Vice-Chairman



Claude B. Patten, Jr., Selectman