



# Office of Board of Selectmen

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**Selectmen's Meeting Minutes**  
**Monday, December 5, 2022, 10:00 a.m.**  
**Belmont Mill**  
**Tioga Meeting Room**

Present were Chairman Ruth Mooney, Selectman Jon Pike, Selectman Claude Patten, Jr., TA Alicia Jipson, Assessing Admin Colleen Akerman, Building & Grounds Supervisor Patrick Golden, Assistant Fire Chief Deb Black, General Assistance Director Donna Cilley, CEO Mark Ekberg, Cemetery Trustee Sharon Ciampi, Budget Committee Chair Ron Mitchell, Peter Christiansen of the American Legion and Earl Leighton of 4-H. Via Zoom was Finance Director Katherine Davis, Library Director Eileen Gilbert, DPW Director Craig Clairmont, Fire Chief Mike Newhall, and Land Use Technician Karen Santoro.

Those present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

## Minutes

Selectman Claude Patten moved the minutes of the public meeting held on November 21, 2022 as written; seconded by Selectman Jon Pike, and the motion passed unanimously.

## New Business

**4-H Request to speak to Board-** Mr. Earl Leighton, president of the 4-H Fair Association, was present to discuss the charitable exemption status of the house located on the fairgrounds property. Mr. Leighton explained they received a letter and updated tax bill for the house. The tenant of the house does caretaking and maintenance on the property, and the house includes a basement and office that are used for the organization, not for the tenant. The tenant pays for the upkeep of the building and all other monies go into the kids who show animals. Selectman Pike asked for clarification that they have not paid tax previously, but recently received a tax bill. Mr. Leighton said that is correct. The tax bill looks like it's for the house only. Selectman Pike received verification that the 4-H Fair Association is a non-profit organization. TA Jipson reported one of the tenants tried to register a vehicle and that triggered some questions from the Town Clerk because the property receives a charitable exemption for taxes. TA Jipson checked RSA 72:23 and there are strict guidelines. There could be a gray area if the tenant is a groundskeeper who helps maintains the property. The boat storage should also be taxed but that is hard to measure. Chairman Ruth Mooney said the Selectmen will have to review this. They don't want to see the property developed. TA Jipson stated the assessor may need to inspect the property to verify the portion being used by the tenant.

Mr. Leighton informed the Board they have changed the ownership of the land to separate the 4-H Association and the Fair as 4-H no longer wants to be in control of the fair. The fair is now its own entity, which changes the rules. Car shows don't have to abide by the 4-H rules. They hope to turn this into an event-oriented property. They have had problems with target practice and illegal dumping, so having a caretaker on site is important. Budget Chair Ron Mitchell recommended the association discuss the situation with the former bookkeeper to see if there is any additional information or documents regarding the exempt status of the house. It was recommended that the association provide a rental agreement for the house that includes details about the caretaking and the use of the funds received from the rent. TA Jipson said she reached out to the BTLA for some guidance, and they were not helpful.

*Selectman Pike moved to allow the 4-H Fair Association to hold off on making a payment on the new tax bill, with no interest or penalties, to enable the Select Board to do some additional review and research. The motion was seconded by Chairman Ruth Mooney and the motion passed unanimously.*

**American Legion Sign Request-** Peter Christiansen of American Legion Post 58 in Belmont requested permission to place sidewalk signs during meeting times. They hold meetings about once a month and have difficulty directing people to the Mill. It is dark at night and the Post is working without their own building so there are regular visitors to their meetings. They do fundraising to support local causes, but people have a hard time finding them. They would set the signs up during the meeting and event times only.

*Selectman Pike moved to accept the American Legion's request for sidewalk signs to be posted during meetings and events; seconded by Selectman Patten. The motion passed unanimously.*

**Town Planner Resignation-** Town Planner Sarah Whearty has submitted her resignation effective December 30th. An ad has not been posted yet, but they have reworked the job title and description to "Planning & Zoning Administrator". She will help with the hiring process and provide assistance after the hire. The description was worked on and reviewed by Planning Board Chair Peter Harris, Planning Board Vice Chair Ward Peterson, Selectman Jon Pike former Town Planner Candace Daigle and TA Alicia Jipson. Selectman Pike reported the Planning Board Chair and Vice Chair stated they are autonomous to the Board of Selectmen and the Selectmen will not have any input in the hiring process. This is a big important job, and it is a very busy department. Selectman Mooney commented things are not slowing down.

**Land Use Clerk New Hire-** Elizabeth Stewart has been hired to start December 13<sup>th</sup> as the full-time Land Use Clerk.

**Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP)-** TA Jipson informed the Board there is a New Hampshire program for residents who are behind on water and sewer bills, or who have been shut off, or are ready to be shut off. Those residents should be directed to Donna Cilley who will help coordinate with the Community Action Program (CAP) for applications. If

the resident receives fuel assistance they should also qualify for the LIHWAP program. This could get some people caught up on overdue bills. It is a one-time payment with no limit on the dollar amount and will be available until September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023. This is not a COVID-related program.

**BOS Rules of Procedure-** The Board has received a draft copy of some Rules of Procedure. A resident asked TA Jipson about Rules of Procedure, but Belmont has never had any. TA Jipson proposed it is a good time to adopt written guidelines to help follow the RSAs. She worked on gathering rules from other municipalities and meshed them into one document. Board members will need to review and make suggestions prior to the public hearing on December 19<sup>th</sup>. The document will need to be revised again for the incoming five-member Board next year. Meeting times will need to be determined at the first meeting of the year after elections. Meetings are currently held during the day so that Town employees may attend without requiring payment of overtime. Chairman Mooney noted more people attend the morning meetings than have attended evening meetings. The Budget Committee meets every Tuesday night and no one attends. The Board of Selectmen does hold evening meetings when necessary.

### **Other New Business**

**Building Safety & Signage-** Budget Chair Ron Mitchell reported he spoke with Barrett Salta about the ceilings in the Mill meeting rooms. He recommends installing corner guards to prevent head injuries and asked Mr. Salta to provide some options. He also had concerns about the square block trim used in the Police Department booking area. It should be a curved bullnose block for safety reasons.

Budget Chair Ron Mitchell suggested some signage for the main entrance to the Mill as people are having some difficulty determining how to enter the building for meetings.

TA Jipson asked if the Building & Grounds Supervisor could purchase the corner guard. Chairman Mooney said let's look at different options and review any products Mr. Salta may have in a catalog. She asked Budget Chair Mitchell to request Mr. Salta send a catalog to Building & Grounds Supervisor Golden.

**Wreaths Across America-** Cemetery Trustee Sharon Ciampi invited everyone to the Wreaths Across America event on December 17<sup>th</sup> at 11:30 starting at the Library monuments. They will move to the South Road cemetery and then the 13 other cemeteries in Town. There are over 200 wreaths for Belmont.

### **Old Business**

**Solid Waste - Small Cart Criteria & Cart Fees for Extra Carts-** Casella provided TA Jipson with the criteria other municipalities have used to determine if residents can qualify for smaller 65-gallon carts, such as being older than 65, disabled, having a driveway that exceeds 200 feet, or other exemptions as determined by the BOS. Town Hall has already received many requests for smaller carts. TA Jipson said every cart will include all of the same information that was

included in the newsletter such as fact sheets, the calendar, how to get a cart replacement, and what is and is not recyclable. It will be attached to the cart when it is delivered. Each residence will receive one cart for trash and one for recycling. Recycling is now mandated and will need to be separated from trash. The level of trash should decrease with more recycling and recycling is less expensive than trash disposal. The program will start with one of each cart for each dwelling unit. The program needs to work through for a month or more before an option to purchase additional carts will be available. The recommended criteria for additional carts are households with more than 4 occupants and other exceptions as determined by the BOS. Property owners would contact Town Hall to make a request for an additional cart. If the Board chooses to pass the cost on to property owners, the \$150.00 fee will be due before January 1<sup>st</sup> of each calendar year. This is the same fee that Casella is charging the Town.

Previously the Town received free recycling, but Casella did not offer that as part of the new contract. The contract went out for bid and the only company who bid was Casella. The choice to move to automated collection service was Casella's, not the Town's. Chairman Mooney said there was no other choice. The Board was encouraged to publicize more about the new program, but there have been mailings, press releases, the newsletter, the website, Facebook posts and a sample can at Town Hall. The Town has tried to publicize as much as possible.

Mr. Murphy was concerned about struggling families paying for an additional cart and suggested allowing property owners to purchase their own less expensive carts at local stores. Chairman Mooney reminded Mr. Murphy that Casella requires special carts to work with their automated collection trucks.

Selectman Pike said in over 18 months of working on solid waste contracts, Casella was the only one who bid. There were no other choices. The Board tried to be proactive, but trash is expensive. There was concern about people stealing the carts, but each can is numbered and assigned to a specific property address to prevent that problem. Legal duplexes and triplexes will each get their own set of carts.

General Assistance Director Donna Cilley urged the Board to provide additional mailings to property owners about why the Town is doing this and what is happening. Chairman Mooney estimated the cost at \$3,500 just for postage to send an additional mailing to almost 5,000 households. No matter how much publicity there is, there will still be people who are unaware.

There was discussion about provisions for those with disabilities and larger families, how to get rid of the old bins, what happens if a cart breaks, and who will enforce the recycling mandate. Casella will enforce the ordinance and will not pick up from repeat offenders. It was calculated that the cost to pay for one additional cart per year per household would be \$750,000.00 annually.

*Selectman Pike moved to charge property owners a fee of \$150 for additional carts requested; seconded by Selectman Patten. The motion passed unanimously.*

**Solid Waste Ordinance-** The Board was provided a draft of the amended Solid Waste Ordinance to include the automation language and definitions for review. It will be posted on the Town's website for review and there will be a public hearing on December 19<sup>th</sup> to accept the amended ordinance.

There was concern about placement of carts at roadsides. TA Jipson acknowledged there will be some tough areas, but that is for Casella to figure out. There are concerns about illegal dumping and burning of trash if people can't fit their trash into a single cart. The ordinance is under review and will be analyzed. Comments can be submitted to the Town Administrator. Selectman Pike said this is going to be a learning process and there will be exceptions. Chairman Mooney said nothing is set in stone and we can look at this again, but we need guidelines to move forward. The ordinance will be subject to review.

### **Other Old Business**

**Police Department Heating System-** Selectman Pike asked if the heating system at the Police Department has been fixed as the furnace was not working properly and the electric bills were very high. TA Jipson is not aware of any issues but will reach out to Chief Lewandoski. Finance Director Katherine Davis noted the electric bill has not increased much between September and November.

**Park & Ride Lighting-** B&G Supervisor Golden reported some of the replacement lights have arrived and they hope to finish installation within about 10 days.

**General Assistance Budget-** General Assistance Director Donna Cilley asked to review some budget changes before meeting with the Budget Committee.

Changes to the budget are marked in red. There is a \$5,500.00 increase from the original proposed budget but there is still an \$8,414.00 decrease to the whole budget. The housing line is not going to stretch as far without the ERAP money. That program is finished, and the free money is gone. Landlords have increased rates and motels and hotels are very expensive. It is a struggle to house homeless families. Electric costs have increased 42% and many people are living to paycheck to paycheck. There is help for low to moderate income people for heating, but not the support services to facilitate the heating program. When there is a lack of support services it takes longer to process applications and the Town pays for those heating services in between. The homeless numbers in the area are astounding. The state is opening a cold weather low barrier shelter at the state school facility in Laconia for the winter. The transportation line needs an increase to help with bus fares, etc.

*Selectman Pike moved to accept the amended General Assistance Budget for \$180,694.34; seconded by Selectman Patten. The motion passed unanimously.*

**SAFER Grant-** Tom Murphy asked for an update on the status of the SAFER Grant. Chairman Mooney said they have not heard back but it will be included on the agenda as soon as they hear back.

**130 Depot Street Code Enforcement Update-** Mr. Gordon Walker was present to give the Board an update on his game plan and schedule to come into compliance. Mr. Walker said he has four employees starting work on Wednesday to remove the tires and it will be perfect by January 1st. CEO Mark Ekberg asked about the tires behind the gate and the cars around the house. Selectman Pike suggested the cars have passed their usefulness and are likely not worthwhile to repair. Mr. Walker should contact a junkyard to get rid of them because they are too old to fix. Chairman Mooney asked for confirmation on the plan. She said everything has to be gone because there is no longer a junkyard license for the property. Mr. Walker was given until Tuesday, January 3rd to clean up the property. CEO Ekberg will inspect the premises prior to the January 3rd BOS meeting.

**Tucker Shore Road Trailer issue-** Selectman Patten asked about an issue with a trailer in the road on Tucker Shore Road. CEO Ekberg said he spoke with the owner of the RV who is not the same as the owner of the property. The door was open, and he could see the RV was being used for storage of construction materials. The RV owner understood that no storage trailers were allowed, and it would be removed by Thanksgiving. The property owner wants to know why they must maintain a registration and how does the town know what the RV is used for. CEO Ekberg explained if the unit is being used as a permanent structure it needs to comply with setbacks and have a building permit. Otherwise, it is portable and can move. He spoke with DPW Director Craig Clairmont with regards to the right-of-way. A copy of the state RSA on right-of-ways was provided to the property owner. Tucker Shore Road is a two-rod road. If we assume the center of the road is the center of the right of way, it would be about 17 feet from the center of the road for the right-of-way. The property owner was encouraged to reach out to the Land Use Department to find out about relief. Selectman Patten said if the trailer is hit with a plow, it would not be the Town's responsibility. CEO Ekberg has been emailing with the property owner but will be sending the owner an official letter from the Town.

### **Next Meetings**

*Selectman Patten moved to start the December 19, 2022, meeting at 9:00am due to the number of public hearings scheduled. The motion was seconded by Selectman Pike and passed unanimously.*

The next regular meeting will be December 19, 2022, at 9:00am.

It was the consensus of the Board to move the January 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting to Tuesday, January 3<sup>rd</sup> due to the holiday.

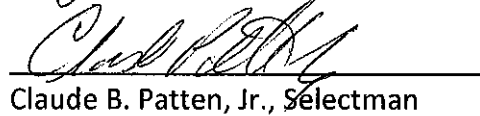
### **Non-Public:**

Chairman Mooney moved to enter non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 II (c) at 11:59 am. Selectman Pike seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously. Roll call was taken and those present, and voting were Jon Pike, Ruth Mooney and Claude Patten, Jr. Also present was TA Alicia Jipson. No votes were taken. The Board returned to public session at 12:15 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:16 pm.

  
Ruth P. Mooney, Chairman

  
Jon Pike, Vice Chairman

  
Claude B. Patten, Jr., Selectman