



Office of Board of Selectmen

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Selectmen's Meeting Minutes Wednesday, May 1, 2024, 10:00 am Belmont Mill, Tioga Meeting Room

Present were Chairman Ruth Mooney, Selectman Jon Pike, Selectman Claude "Sonny" Patten, Jr., Selectman Travis O'Hara, Selectman Sharon Ciampi, TA Alicia Jipson, Executive Assistant Colleen Akerman, Town Planner Karen Santoro, Building Official Glenn Caron, Police Chief Mark Lewandoski, Police Captain Stephen Akerstrom, Fire Chief Deb Black, DPW Director Craig Clairmont, General Assistance Director Donna Cilley, Building & Grounds Supervisor Patrick Golden, Parks & Rec Director Danielle St. Onge, Library Director Eileen Gilbert, and Budget Vice Chair Tracey LeClair. Via Zoom was Land Use Clerk Jenn Thomas.

Those present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Review & Approve Minutes – 04/17/2024 :

Selectman Sonny Patten moved the minutes of the meeting held on April 17, 2024 as written; seconded by Selectman Jon Pike. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Old Home Day Update:

Chairman Ruth Mooney adjusted the posted agenda to allow Parks & Rec Director Danielle St. Onge to present first, from Old Business, for an Old Home Day Update.

Parks & Rec Director Danielle St. Onge reported the Old Home Day Committee has met three times recently and it was the consensus that this is a big event for our local non-profits and school groups to fundraise and it would have a big impact for them if it was canceled. Everyone provided ideas for an event that would have zero cost to the Town, for daytime events only. We've received guidance from Legal as well. Northeast Delta Dental is going to cover all costs for the road race. It is their intent to host the race even if there is no Old Home Day event. A small budget would be needed to provide trophies for the parade, the Fun Run and the Tractor Pull, as well as entertainment. The Committee, if the Board gives their permission, would like to have a police detail at the reduced \$55 rate for 6 hours for the daytime event. They are going to try to coordinate with the Heritage Commission to contribute towards the cost of entertainment, such as a band, so that more activities can be provided for the children. They are anticipated The trash dumpster normally costs \$350 for 15-20 bags of trash, but there will be less trash with a shorter, more bare bones event. Hopefully trash can be dispersed to Town dumpsters without incurring an additional cost. There is a contingency amount of \$600 in the event of an issue, such as with the Pavilion bathrooms. This will save on the cost of renting porta-potties and hopefully there will be no need for a contingency. The total budget is estimated at \$1,480. Program book ad costs will be increased this year but they

are still lower than other towns. There will also be a page for families to make donations that will raise \$600. There will be no anonymous donations because the Town will be unable to accept them. It is anticipated that there will be \$400-\$500 collected in vendor fees. The Church plans to do a pancake breakfast and the OHD Committee hopes the Fire Department will continue with their Chicken Barbecue. They are hoping for community support from the younger generation, but so far their helpers are from older generations. Fire Chief Deb Black confirmed that the Department plans to hold the Chicken Barbecue.

Anonymous donations or donations from a GoFundMe are not allowed to be accepted by the Board of Selectmen. All donors will need to get a receipt and their names recorded in order for the Board to be able to accept any OHD donation funds.

Building & Grounds Supervisor Patrick Golden stated the electrical will also need to be checked by a licensed electrician before vendors plug into our receptacles. The cost could be \$200-\$400 depending on whether there is any damage from mice, etc.

Selectman Travis O'Hara moved to reinstate Old Home Day as described as long as all expenses are paid by the Old Home Day Committee with no taxpayer funds to be used, and to close the roads as previously approved 03/06/2024; seconded by Selectman Sharon Ciampi. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

New Business:

Fee Schedule Update Consideration – Building Permits, Special Events & Facility Use:

Town Planner Karen Santoro and Building Official Glenn Caron presented updates to building permit fees. Board members received a spreadsheet with current, proposed and comparison fees to other local municipalities. The proposed fees are not near the top of the scale, but more in line with Laconia. Belmont's fees have been low comparatively. TA Alicia Jipson noted the building permit fee schedule was last updated over five years ago in 2019. Planner Santoro stated the intention is to bring fees in line with others in a moderate way and not penalize homeowners. Most of the changes are for the multipliers, but utility permits are proposed to increase to \$75 each, which is a flat rate. Other municipalities charge up to \$250 for the same type of permits. Chairman Mooney suggested increasing the cell tower fee to \$500 to bring it more in line with others. Selectman Jon Pike asked about fees for RV units placed on a lot for personal use. There was discussion about some units that are currently on the violation list. Planner Santoro explained use of a unit for more than 2 weeks or if charging rent, need to be permitted and connected to sewage disposal (septic or sewer). Selectman Pike recommended a flat fee of \$120 for RVs placed outside of a campground. Planner Santoro stated some of the campgrounds pay fees for decks and sheds only, based on the size and type of use. Others must use the regular building permit process.

Selectman Ciampi asked for clarification on the fee for gas. Mechanicals would be \$75 each, which would include tank swaps, such as when a resident changes from one propane provider to another. Inspections are required to be certain the tanks are connected and

installed properly. Some companies pass the permit fee on to the customer while others include the permit fee with their service.

Selectman O'Hara moved to approve the Building Permit Fee as presented with an amendment to section G. Cell Tower increased to \$500 and section D. Recreational Vehicles greater than 320sf increased to a flat \$120 with no multiplier, effective 05/01/2024; seconded by Selectman Pike. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

The Board reviewed proposed fees for Special Events, which previously did not include any fees. Special Events typically involve inspections for tents, propane and electrical, and basing the fees on how many vendors will be at an event is reasonable. A review of fees for similar activities in other municipalities was completed. Non-profit organizations can request a waiver or reduction of fees from the Board of Selectmen. There is currently no ordinance for special events but the fees will help offset the manhours for review, processing and inspections. There was discussion about what would be considered a vendor, compared to the "host" of a show or event. Old Home Day is exempt from any fees because it is our own event.

Chairman Mooney moved to approve the Special Events Fee schedule as presented, effective 05/01/2024; seconded by Selectman Pike. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

The Board reviewed Facility Use fees. TA Jipson suggested keeping the rental fee for either the Pavilion or the Mill at \$50 for individuals, and setting it at \$100 for for-profit groups. There was discussion about types of events and security for the Mill building, as well as cleaning and trash disposal. It was proposed that fees be added for cleaning and use of the bathrooms at the Pavilion, however the consensus was to make it one flat fee of \$150. There will be a future discussion about updates to the Facility Use policy but this decision is only in reference to the fees. Non-profit organizations can request a waiver or reduction of fees from the Board of Selectmen.

Selectman Pike moved to approve a Facility Use flat fee of \$150 for the Pavilion; seconded by Selectman O'Hara. Motion passed (4-1). Selectman Ciampi opposed.

Selectman Pike requested more research be completed on use of the Mill. He would like to see it used but not misused.

Building Official/Code Enforcement Office Quarterly Update:

Building Official/CEO Glenn Caron and Planner Santoro gave a recap of permits issued to date this year, compared to the same timeframe last year. There are 81 building permits this year compared to 57 last year. Total self-reported project costs of \$7,467,925 are double last year's costs at this time. There are 11 new house applications compared to last year at this time, and solar applications jumped from 8 last year to 13 this year. Commercial project costs this year are \$80,000 compared to \$100,000 last year at this time.

Selectman Pike asked about Code Enforcement. Things have been busy with building inspections. There were lots of things to catch up on and old permits that had not been closed out or updated. CEO Caron is starting to figure out where the prior CEO was with properties in violation. There is a letter going out today for one property, and he has completed inspections and photos on some other properties.

752 Laconia Road has completed a lot of cleanup but the real estate listing includes an apartment above the garage that has not been permitted. There is apparently no access/stairs for the space above the garage, and the CEO cannot enforce entering to inspect the premises without an administrative warrant. A letter can be sent requesting the proper paperwork be completed for the apartment, which will create a paper trail. It was noted that any new property owners inherit any problems/violations that exist on a property. There is a court order that if the property is not sold by June 1st, monthly restitution payments for legal expenses will need to begin July 1st.

Selectman O'Hara asked about the McLean property at 328 Union Road. CEO Caron has visited the site and taken photos. Mr. McLean phoned but has not returned three phone messages. CEO Caron has not seen the paperwork yet, but the resident agreed to move things that have not been moved yet, and he did not come in for his Contractor's Yard application. NHDES was contacted about a spill from a damaged truck on the property. There was discussion about probate and properties in violation and notifications to the court.

15 Johnson Street is still in limbo but the bank has admitted ownership. Selectman Pike said we need to do our due diligence and send any notices to the bank.

Readopt Investment Policy:

This is a housekeeping item completed every year at the request of our auditor. There are no changes.

Selectman O'Hara moved to readopt the Investment Policy as presented; seconded by Selectman Pike. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Heritage Commission – Linda Frawley Memorial:

The Board received an email in their packet with information from Heritage Commission Chairman Vicki Donovan about a plan to remember Linda Frawley by planting daffodils around Town. They will check with Building and Grounds and DPW to be sure they don't plant anything in the way of mowing.

Finance Consultant Update:

TA Jipson reported that we are getting some help from a consultant who used to be a Finance Director, has 35 years of experience with municipalities, and is knowledgeable with our BMSI software. She is going to come once a week to help us get out of the hole we are in and to train Steve Forster. This will help get us up to speed for our audit in June. We will be cutting ties with former Finance Director Katherine Davis.

Selectman Pike moved to approve hiring Joanne Smith as our Financial Consultant; seconded by Selectman Patten. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Selectman Ciampi asked if there is a timeline on the contract and the cost. The contract is until the end of the year but we can end it earlier if necessary. The cost is \$85 per hour. It will be tight with the budget, but with the savings on the Finance Director's salary and the delay hiring a Finance Clerk, it should be a wash.

Mi-Box Donations:

The Police and Fire Departments were contacted about donations of a Mi-Box and the Police Department jumped on it. The Fire Department is interested as well. The Police Department will use it to store bicycles and other things they need to hold onto for a time. It will keep them under cover and out of the weather. There was discussion about the code for storage containers and the ordinance was changed in March. They are allowed with permits except in the Village District, however the Town is exempt from its own regulations. The Fire Department will place their unit out back where it will only be seen by people entering the parking area. We are fortunate to have the donations because there are no funds for building or buying a shed.

Selectman Ciampi moved to accept the donation of two Mi-Boxes for use by the Police and Fire Departments; seconded by Selectman O'Hara. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Well #1 Bid Opening Update:

DPW Director Craig Clairmont reported there were three bidders and the winner was someone they are familiar with, who has done most of the repairs on our current wells. They have worked for the Town for 35-40 years. Well #4 will be started this year in proximity to Well #1. There is some tree work to do. TA Jipson noted this work is funded by ARPA funds from 2021-2022 from the government, which were earmarked for \$80,000 for body cameras and \$500,000 for the well replacement. Well #1 is from 1938 and will be kept for monitoring. Funds need to be obligated by the end of this year, the project must be completed and all funds expended by the end of 2026. Underwood Engineering is overseeing the project.

VW Mitigation Grant:

The new truck for DPW obtained through the VW Mitigation Grant should be in next week or the week after and then it will be fitted for parts.

Other New Business:

Purple Heart Community:

Selectman Sharon Ciampi stepped down from the Board to present as a citizen.

Ms. Ciampi proposed that Belmont become a Purple Heart Community, like some other NH communities. The Purple Heart is a combat decoration and the oldest medal. It is a badge of military merit. This program creates a tribute for those who were awarded the Purple Heart

and provides signs for the community as a visual reminder of their sacrifices. Belmont has qualifying members to participate who have been verified by the Town Clerk. There is no cost to the Town, but there is a cost for the signs. It is \$316.20 for 6 signs. Ms. Ciampi came to the Board for their approval of the program before pursuing donations for the signs. Ms. Ciampi will be doing some more research on Belmont's Purple Heart recipients, but the program does not require personally naming recipients, whether alive or deceased. TA Jipson recommended a press release asking for more information about recipients. It was suggested that the American Legion may help with funding for the signs. It was the consensus of the Board to move forward with participation in this program.

Selectman Ciampi rejoined the Board.

Fire Department New Hire:

Fire Chief Deb Black reported they have offered the final grant position to Gavin Martin and he has accepted the offer. The background check is in process and he hopes to start soon. His grandfather is retired from Belmont so he is familiar with the area and the Belmont Fire Department.

Old Business:

Close out of the COVID-19 Public Assistance FEMA Grant \$6,735.29:

Fire Chief Black Deb reported this is the final part of a grant received several years ago that will cover administrative fees for work done by the prior Administrative Assistant and Chief. The funds should be received shortly and this will close out the grant.

Other Old Business:

Response from Winni River Basin about the Route 140 Force Main:

A memo from WRBP in response to our letter was provided to Board members but the WRBP is not changing their stance and the cost appears to have increased. Chairman Mooney asked if the State will hold public hearings on this project. TA Jipson said the next meeting is in June and she will get more information. Chairman Mooney reminded everyone these agreements were put in place 40-50 years ago and the current Board has no control over the project.

130 Depot Street Court Order Update:

The court order expires today. All materials constituting the junkyard are supposed to be removed by today or the Town can enter the property and remove volatile items. If there is a dispute, a motion can be filed at the court. If the property owner fails to reimburse the Town within 60 days, we can attach the property. We were awarded civil penalties of \$275 per day since November 2022 plus attorney fees and costs to pursue the violations. The court granted us everything we were pursuing. If the order expires the Town will be permitted to enter and remove materials because the property will be in default. There was discussion about potential next steps and TA Jipson will consult with our attorney. Selectman Pike has offered to take on the project of selling the cars and getting appraisals. Chairman Mooney recommends a civil standby if Selectman Pike is visiting the property.

Selectman O'Hara moved to get a legal opinion from our attorney on what is allowed, and to give Selectman Pike the authority to start the process of visiting and evaluating the scrap metal situation at 130 Depot Street; seconded by Selectman Patten. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Quarterly Budget Update:

Spending so far is at 31% of the budget and the target was 33%, so we are trending just under the target budget percentage. Some departments are above the percentage but things will ebb and flow during the year. So far we are maintaining the default budget.

Gale School:

There is a request to extend this grant for two more years instead of just one. This is a Community Development Block Grant for \$500,000.

Selectman Ciampi moved to extend the \$500,000 Community Development Block Grant for two years; seconded by Selectman O'Hara. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Main Street/Route 140 Intersection:

A date is needed for NHDOT to come and meet with the Board and Department heads about the intersection. The consensus was Tuesday, May 28th at 10:00 am at the Mill.

Next Regular Meeting Date: May 15, 2024

Public Comment: None

Mill Update:

Building & Grounds has tried to obtain pricing from 5 or 6 contractors to work on the drainage around the Mill but only one has provided a price so far. That price is \$16,000. Patrick will update the Board again when he has more information.

Non-Public:

Selectman Pike moved to enter non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 II c at 11:53 am; seconded by Selectman Ciampi. Roll Call 1: J. Pike – aye, S. Patten – aye, T. O'Hara – aye, S. Ciampi – aye, R. Mooney – aye. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Those present and voting were Chairman Ruth Mooney and Selectmen Jon Pike, Claude Patten, Jr., Travis O'Hara, and Sharon Ciampi. Also present were TA Alicia Jipson and Executive Assistant Colleen Akerman.

The Board reviewed a request for reconsideration of the denial of a Veterans Property Tax Credit at 251 Leavitt Road.

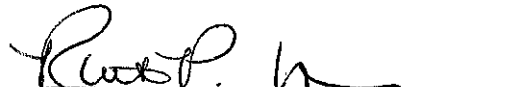
Selectman Patten moved to uphold the denial of the Veterans Property Tax credit at 251 Leavitt Road due to lack of verification that the property is the applicant's principal place of abode; seconded by Selectman Ciampi. Roll Call 2: S. Ciampi – aye, T. O'Hara – aye, S. Patten – aye, J. Pike – aye, R. Mooney – aye. Motion passed (5-0).

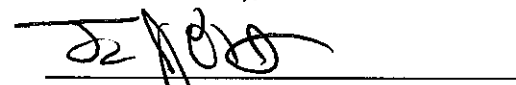
TA Alicia Jipson reported on US Department of Labor proposed overtime rule changes for exempt salaried employees. She will do some additional research and keep the Board posted on any new information.

Selectman O'Hara moved to exit non-public session at 12:08 pm seconded by Selectman Pike. Roll Call 3: S. Patten – aye, S. Ciampi – aye, J. Pike – aye, T. O'Hara – aye, R. Mooney – aye. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).


Adjournment:

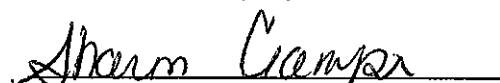
Selectman Pike moved to adjourn the meeting at 12:10 pm; seconded by Selectman Patten. Roll Call 4: T. O'Hara – aye, J. Pike – aye, S. Ciampi – aye, S. Patten – aye, R. Mooney – aye. Motion passed (5-0).


Ruth P. Mooney, Chairman


Travis O'Hara, Vice Chairman


Jon Pike, Selectman


Claude B. Patten, Jr., Selectman


Sharon Ciampi, Selectman