

Deliberative Session Minutes - 2021

TO THE INHABITANTS OF THE TOWN OF BELMONT IN THE COUNTY OF BELKNAP, IN THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE, QUALIFIED TO VOTE IN TOWN AFFAIRS:

FIRST SESSION

You are hereby notified to meet for the First (Deliberative) Session of the Annual Town Meeting, to be held at the Belmont High School, 255 Seavey Road, Belmont, New Hampshire on the 30th day of January 2021, being a Saturday at 10 o'clock in the forenoon. The First (Deliberative) Session will consist of explanation, discussion, and debate of each of the following warrant articles, and will afford those voters who are present the opportunity to propose, debate and adopt amendments to each warrant article, except those articles whose wording is prescribed by State law.

Town Moderator Alvin Nix introduce himself and welcomed everyone to the annual session. Everyone stood up and joined in the pledge of elegance.

Moderator Nix then introduced Ruth Mooney, Chairman, Board of Selectman; Jon Pike Vice-Chairman, Board of Selectman; Claude "Sonny" Patten, Board of Selectman; Ronald Mitchell, Chairman, Budget Committee; Jeanne Beaudin, Town Administrator; Alicia Jipson, Assistant Town Administrator; Cynthia DeRoy Town Clerk/Tax Collector; Michelle Stanyan Assistant Town Clerk/Tax Collector; and Brenda Paquet, Donna Shepherd, Nikki Wheeler, supervisors of checklists.

Then Moderator Nix explained that we are in the middle of a pandemic, and that residents are allowed to come up to speak on the articles during time of discussion. He advised where the exits are in case of an emergency, also to silence cell phones.

Moderator Nix surveyed the room to confirm the residents in town and who was not. In total there are three people in the room that are not voters, which then were advised they were not allowed to amend any articles. Moderator Nix explained how to social distance at the podium for the residents to be able to have their discussion, and to respect each other.

SECOND SESSION

You are also notified to meet for the Second Session of the Annual Town Meeting, to elect Town Officers by official ballot and to vote by official ballot on the warrant articles as they may have been amended at the First (Deliberative) Session, to be held at the Belmont High School, 255 Seavey Road, Belmont, New Hampshire on the 9th day of March 2021, being a Tuesday,

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between the hours of 7:00 o'clock in the forenoon and 7:00 o'clock in the afternoon, to act upon the following:

Article #1. To choose necessary officers, including Selectman three-year term (1), Budget Committee three-year term (4), Trustee of Trust Funds three-year term (1), Library Trustee three-year term (1), Cemetery Trustee three-year term (1), Supervisor of the Checklist six-year term (1), Planning Board three-year term (2), and Zoning Board of Adjustment three-year term (2).

Nix then read off the individual running for candidacy.

No discussion, moved to article 2.

Moderator Nix read the list of names of the candidates for office.

Upon no discussion article moved to ballot.

Article #2. Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 1 as proposed by Petition for the Town Zoning Ordinance as follows: Amend the Zoning Map of the Town of Belmont referenced in Zoning Article 3.B to change the zoning of Tax Lots 237-003-000-000, 237-004-000-000, 237-005-000-000 and 237-006-000-000 from "Rural" to "Residential Multi-Family"?

(This article was submitted by Petition and is **not** recommended by the Planning Board and is **not** recommended by the Board of Selectmen.)

Peter Harris, 346 Hurricane Road, Chairman of the Planning Board, stated they did not want to change the lots from 3 acres to 1 acre which can make it so the lots can be sold at 1 acre lots that will then make it so it will increase the growth in town. He then stated the amount of taxes the town would collect will not be enough to cover how much it will cost the town to have schools and emergency services for the increase to population.

Selectman Pike, who is the Select Board representative on the Planning Board, also added that the growth of the town will make the zoning ordinance will increase.

Upon no discussion article moved to ballot.

Article #3. To see if the Town is in favor of increasing the number of Library Trustees from 3 to 5; if this article passes, 2 additional Library Trustees will be elected at the 2022 Town Meeting, one for a one-year term and one for a two-year term.

Upon no discussion article moved to ballot.

Article #4. To see if the Town will vote to amend the vote taken on Article 7 at the 1999 Annual Meeting to restrict all revenues from ambulance billings to be deposited in the Special Revenue fund known as the Fire/Ambulance Equipment and Apparatus Fund to instead restrict all but the

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first \$124,500 of revenues from ambulance billings received during the 2021 budgetary year to be deposited in the Special Revenue fund known as the Fire/Ambulance Equipment and Apparatus Fund. The first \$124,500 of revenues from ambulance billings will be deposited in the Town's General Fund to defray the cost items identified below. This restriction shall only be effective for the 2021 budgetary year. **(A 2/3 Ballot Vote Required).**

Training Expenses	\$3,000
Medical & Supply Expenses	\$30,000
Ambulance Billing Fees	\$20,000
Overtime	\$40,000
Telephone	\$2,000
Conferences & Dues	\$1,500
Office Expense	\$12,000
Vehicle Repair & Parts	\$8,000
Fuel	\$8,000

Upon no discussion article moved to ballot.

Article #5. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Sixty Thousand Seven Hundred Seventy Six Dollars (\$60,776) for the sixth year's payment on the long term lease/purchase agreement entered into in 2016 for the purchase of a new pumper truck for the Fire Department, and to fund this appropriation by authorizing the withdrawal of said amount from the Fire/Ambulance Equipment and Apparatus Special Revenue Fund previously established in accordance with RSA 31:95, c (Created 1994/Amended 1999). **The Town is obligated by the terms of the lease/purchase agreement, as well as the super majority ratifying that agreement in Article 4 at the 2016 Town Meeting, to make these yearly payments.**

(The Budget Committee recommends \$60,776 and the Board of Selectmen supports this recommendation.)

Upon no discussion article moved to ballot.

Article #6. To see if the Town will vote to expend the income from the John M. Sargent Trust Fund for the purposes recommended by the Sargent Fund Committee?

First Baptist Church of Belmont Food Pantry	\$11,639.10
Saint Joseph Food Pantry	\$11,639.10
Total Funds to be distributed	\$23,278.20

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Donna Shepherd, 351 Brown Hill Road, inquired as to why there weren't more groups such as the "Save our Gale School" as an option to receive funds from the John M. Sargent Trust Fund and only the two food pantries as options.

Selectman Mooney stated with the Covid-19 pandemic that there would be more of a need for food, and the food pantries need the money the most. Selectman Mooney added there are times the shelves at the food pantries were running low.

Upon no discussion article moved to ballot.

Article #7. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the deliberative session, for the purposes set forth herein, totaling Eight Million Two Hundred Sixty-Four Thousand Three Hundred Seventy-One Dollars (\$8,264,371)? Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be Eight Million Four Hundred Twelve Thousand Four Hundred Sixty-Nine Dollars (\$8,412,469) which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Town or by law; or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13 X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only.

Note: This warrant article (operating budget) does not include appropriations in ANY other warrant article.

(The Budget Committee recommends **\$8,264,371** and the Board of Selectmen support this recommendation.)

Ronald Mitchell, Planning Board Chairman, thanked everyone from the budget committee and the department heads for trying to not raise their budgets to keep the amounts less for the burden of taxes.

Amanda McKim, 461 Brown Hill Road inquired why the budget for the Parks and Recreation Department was at the amount proposed. Selectman Mooney stated that was because of the social distancing issues we do not have a good space for the kids to be six feet from each other. We did not know if the school can be used to have the space for the children in the summer program. We did not have room in the mill. We were able to keep the beach open during the Summer of 2020 because Selectman Pike and Selectman Patten volunteered to keep our beach clean. The town will need to hire gate keepers for 2021 to keep the beach for use by the residents only. In 2020 the gate was guarded by the Belmont Police Department since there were so many people that were not residents or tax payers trying to get into the beach. Old Home Day is something the town wants to do, but because of the Covid-19 and the guidelines we are not sure if it can happen.

At the time there was no further discussion, and the meeting continues to Article 8. Then A. McKim came back to Article 7 to talk about the differences between the annual budgets for Parks

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and Recreation since 2019. A. McKim made a motion to increase the operation budget for \$60,000 specifically for the Parks and Recreation to be increased. She then submitted her motion to Moderator Nix, he then asked for a second motion.

Edith Takantjas of 93 Bean Hill Road second the motion.

George Condodemetraky, 194 Gilmanton Road, motioned as well.

Moderator Nix called for a vote, majority opposed.

Upon no discussion article moved to ballot.

Article #8. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Sixty Thousand Dollars (\$60,000) to be placed in the Highway Department Heavy Equipment Capital Reserve Fund previously established (2002).

(The Board of Selectmen recommends **\$60,000** and the Budget Committee support this recommendation.)

G. Condodemetraky asked how much money is currently in the fund for the heavy equipment. Moderator Nix then referenced the warrant, which is \$93,311.43.

Upon no discussion article moved to ballot.

Article #9. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Thirty Thousand dollars (\$30,000) to be placed in the Accrued Benefits Liability Expendable Trust Fund previously established (2007), and further to fund said appropriation by authorizing the transfer of \$30,000 from the unexpended fund balance as of December 31, 2020.

(The Board of Selectmen recommends **\$30,000** and the Budget Committee supports this recommendation.)

Upon no discussion article moved to ballot.

Article #10. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$2,500) to be placed in the Dry Hydrant and Cistern Repairs and Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund previously established (2010).

(The Board of Selectmen recommends **\$2,500** and the Budget Committee supports this recommendation.)

Upon no discussion article moved to ballot.

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Article #11. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Seven Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$750,000) to be placed in the Highway Reconstruction and Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund previously established (2006).

(The Board of Selectmen recommends **\$750,000** and the Budget Committee supports this recommendation.)

Upon no discussion article moved to ballot.

Article #12. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000) to be placed in the Town Bridge Repair and Maintenance Capital Reserve fund previously established (2003).

(The Board of Selectmen recommends **\$25,000** and the Budget Committee support this recommendation.)

Upon no discussion article moved to ballot.

Article #13. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Two Hundred Sixty-Eight Thousand Seven Hundred Seventy-Five Dollars (\$268,775) for the operation and maintenance of the Water Distribution and Treatment System for the ensuing year, said sum is to be offset by users' fees. Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be Two Hundred Sixty-Four Thousand Twenty-Four Dollars (\$264,024) which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Town or by law.

(The Budget Committee recommends **\$268,775** and the Board of Selectmen supports this recommendation.)

Upon no discussion article moved to ballot.

Article #14. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Five Hundred Thirty-Three Thousand Forty Dollars (\$533,040) for the operation and maintenance of the Sewage Collection and Disposal System for the ensuing year, said sum is to be offset by users' fees. Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be Five Hundred Twenty-Eight Thousand Five Dollars (\$528,005) which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Town or by law.

(The Budget Committee recommends **\$533,040** and the Board of Selectmen supports this recommendation.)

Upon no discussion article moved to ballot.

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Article #15. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000) to be placed in the Property Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund previously established (2005).

(The Board of Selectmen recommends **\$25,000** and the Budget Committee support this recommendation.)

Upon no discussion article moved to ballot.

Article #16. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Hundred Ninety-One Thousand Six Hundred Eighty-Six Dollars (\$191,686) for the reconstruction of highways, said appropriation to be offset by Highway Block Grant funds provided by the State of New Hampshire?

(The Board of Selectmen recommends **\$191,686** and the Budget Committee supports this recommendation.)

Upon no discussion article moved to ballot.

Article #17. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Four Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$4,500) to be placed in the Heritage Fund previously established (2005).

(The Board of Selectmen recommends **\$4,500** and the Budget Committee supports this recommendation.)

G. Condodemetraky opened discussion stating the account balance is \$39,000 and wanted to know what the \$4,500 to use it for.

TA Beaudin stated the money has been used for the 150th anniversary in town, maintain the bandstand, and the banners along Main Street which costs about \$1,000 to replace and they have not been replaced in about 20 years.

G. Condodemetraky then said they do not need more money and they seem to not use the money that is in their account.

Ronald Mitchell then added we are proud of Belmont; the Heritage Fund members are all volunteers to help maintain Belmont. R. Mitchell also added at times you have to think of the amount in the account as a rainy-day fund so it can build up to be able to spend at some point in time.

G. Condodemetraky concluded that almost \$40,000 is a lot of money to have in their account and adding \$4,500 is adding a lot of money to something that is not being used.

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Upon no discussion article moved to ballot.

Article #18. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000) to be placed in the Water System Repair and Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund previously established (2006) said sum is to be offset by users' fees.

(The Board of Selectmen recommends **\$100,000** and the Budget Committee supports this recommendation.)

G. Condodemetraky stated the amount of this is allocated well since it will cost a lot of money potentially fix the water system.

Beth Anderson, 30 Mountain View Terrace, asked how we offset the balance with the user fee. TA Beaudin spoke about how the users offset when they are paying their water amount with how the rate is created with the base amount plus the charges for the metered use.

Upon no discussion article moved to ballot.

Article #19. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000) to be placed in the Library Building Improvements Capital Reserve Fund previously established (2000).

(The Board of Selectmen recommends **\$25,000** and the Budget Committee supports this recommendation.)

Upon no discussion article moved to ballot.

Article #20. To see if the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000) to be placed in the Municipal Facilities Capital Reserve Fund previously established (2006).

(The Board of Selectmen recommends **\$100,000** and the Budget Committee support this recommendation.)

G. Condodemetraky inquired about how the account had over \$200,000 in 2020 and he wanted to know where the money was spent.

R. Mitchell explained the money was used to create the two meeting rooms and the Welfare Department in the Mill Building since they were previously located in the Corner Meeting House since new police department is being built in that spot they had to be moved.

G. Condodemetraky then asked why the town did not put that out to vote by the residents.

TA Beaudin stated that the Board of Selectmen is allowed to make the decisions for the town as previously voted by the residents.

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Condodemetraky said he will then challenge it by law.

Upon no discussion article moved to ballot

Article #21. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000) to be placed in the Election Equipment Expendable Trust Fund previously established (2020).

(The Board of Selectmen recommends **\$1,000** and the Budget Committee supports this recommendation.)

Upon no discussion article moved to ballot.

Article #22. To see if the Town will vote to establish a Public Health and Safety Expendable Trust Fund pursuant to RSA 31:19-a for the purposes of supporting the Town's response to public health, general welfare and public safety emergencies and to raise and appropriate Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000) into said Fund, such amount to come from unassigned fund balance; and further, to name the Board of Selectmen as agents to expend the fund. (Majority vote required.)

(The Board of Selectmen recommends **\$50,000** and the Budget Committee supports this recommendation.)

Upon no discussion article moved to ballot.

Article #23. To see if the Town will vote to establish a Durrell Mountain Road Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund under the provisions of RSA 35:1 for the purpose of maintaining Durrell Mountain Road and to raise and appropriate the sum of Seven Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$7,500) to be placed in this fund, such amount to come from unassigned fund balance; and further to name the Board of Selectmen as agents to expend from said fund. (Majority Vote Required.)

(The Board of Selectmen recommends **\$7,500** and the Budget Committee supports this recommendation.)

Denise Naiva, 27 Swallow Road, wanted clarification on the payments from the gravel pit. TA Beaudin stated the annual payment from the gravel pit is \$5,000 per year until the gravel pit is closed.

D. Naiva asked to confirmed if the road has a plan to be maintained, and if the \$5,000 is enough to maintain the road.

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TA Beaudin said the roads are posted and bonded due to the weight and use of the road. Also, it won't cover the whole road but there is natural wear and tear from other use of the road that is not from the gravel pit.

Upon no discussion article moved to ballot.

Article #24. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) to be placed in the Information Technology Non-Capital reserve account previously established (2002), and further to fund said appropriation by authorizing the transfer of \$20,000 from the unexpended fund balance as of December 31, 2020

(The Board of Selectmen recommends **\$20,000** and the Budget Committee supports this recommendation.)

Upon no discussion article moved to ballot.

Article #25. To see if the Town will vote to reduce the percentage of the Land Use Change Tax collected pursuant to RSA 79-A:25 that is deposited into the existing Conservation Fund from 100% to 50%. If adopted this article shall take effect April 1st, and shall remain in effect until altered or rescinded by a future vote of the Town Meeting. (Majority vote required).

D. Naiva, chairman of the Conversation Commission, spoke on when a property is in Current Use it helps to keep Belmont rural to reduce development. It also helps to keep fair taxation for individuals such as farmers. In the early 2000's the residents voted on this to lower property turn over, and not to over increase the residential growth. The building permits have increased in the town by over 20% from in 2020 from 2019. The commission is run by volunteers to protect our open land and water. D. Naiva stated the Board of Selectman did not speak with the conservation commission in regards to this. D. Naiva then provided Moderator Nix an amendment to not lower the Land Use Change Tax to 50% in the Conservation Fund.

Moderator Nix called for a second motion.

A. McKim second motion.

Selectman Mooney spoke that she personally has land that is current use, and the departments try to keep the towns operation budget lower, and the tax rate is due to the school's budget. We would be able to have paid for the Police Department in cash if their budget wasn't increased. It is basically a balance act to look at the burden of taxes and when a property goes into the conservation status that then takes it off the tax roll. Selectman Mooney pointed out we are not Alton and Gilford; our town does not have the large amount of lake front taxes to come in and we have to work harder to get out taxes.

Ken Knowlton, 128 Lamprey Road, stated when the property values went up the town would then become developed more. Open space does not have a cost. Developed land will then have a cost for example schools or emergency services. Knowlton stated a family with 2 kids in the

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school costs more in taxes than what they bring in. K. Knowlton stated the conservation commission has two properties have recently been donated. This is a tool to help the town of Belmont to not be over developed and to help to keep rural. Also, he stated that they go in front of the Board of Selectman to get approval of the properties they purchase. They believe they need more money to able preserve the properties or areas such as the Tioga River.

Donna Cilley, 83 Jodi Drive, opposing the amendment, stated the town has done a good job maintaining the properties. D. Cilley spoke that some residents in town would want to look into putting their properties into Current Use. D. Cilley also added most of the other towns or cities in the state will split their current use penalty as the article is proposing.

Moderator Nix called for a vote, majority opposed the motion.

Article #26. To see if the Town will vote to notify the New Hampshire General Court of its requirements for nonpartisan fair redistricting. The New Hampshire General Court is obligated to redraw the maps of political districts within the State following the federal census which was recently completed. Belmont NH voters require fair and effective representation of New Hampshire voters in the redistricting process without gerrymandering. Additionally, these voters ask the Town of Belmont, NH to have the NH General Court carry out the redistricting in a fair and transparent way through public meetings, not to favor a particular political party, to include communities of interest, and to minimize multi-seat districts.

The record of the vote approving this article shall be transmitted by written notice from the Town Administrator to Belmont NH's state legislators, informing them of the demands from their constituents within 30 days of the vote. **(This article submitted by Petition.)**

Upon no discussion article moved to ballot.

Article #27. To see if the Town will vote to discontinue completely, Weston Road, from the northwesterly property line of Timothy & Allison Ellis (Tax Map 232 Lot 30) to its end at property of Pike Industries, Inc. (Tax Map 232 Lot 31) with ownership to revert to the abutters, and thereby cease any an all-public right to Weston Road as it crosses the Ellis and Pike Land. **(This article submitted by Petition.)**

Timothy Ellis added an amendment to the article to "discontinuance is condition upon Timothy and Allison Ellis providing an appropriate turn around easement for the road maintenance and emergency vehicles." This will be added to the end of the article.

Craig Clairmont second the motion

Jennifer Despres, 205 Middle Route, asked for clarification on what the amendment to the article was.

Craig Clairmont, Director of the Department of Public Works, stated this amendment will add another spot that the emergency and town vehicles will be able to turn around on.

Moderator Nix stated it would not dead end the road.

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Moderator Nix called for a vote for amendment
Majority stood to motion to amend the article.

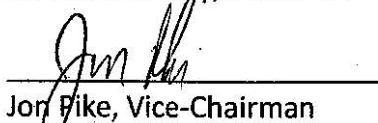
Upon no discussion article and amendment moved to ballot.

Moderator Nix asked for further comments at the time, which nobody stood up at that point. Moderator Nix thanked everyone for attending, and motioned to conclude at 11:32 for the session, Selectman Pike second the motion. Moderator Nix then concluded the session, declaring the meeting dissolved until the March 9, 2020 election.

Given under our hands and seal this the 19th day of January in the year of our lord two thousand and twenty-one.



Ruth P. Mooney, Chairman



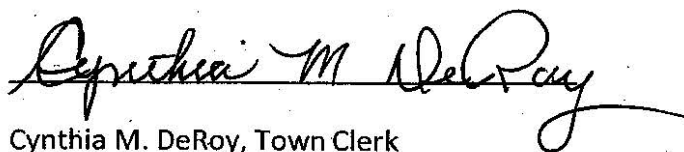
Jon Pike, Vice-Chairman



Claude B. Patten, Jr.

Belmont Board of Selectmen

A TRUE COPY ATTEST:



Cynthia M. DeRoy, Town Clerk



Michelle Stanyan, Assistant Town Clerk
Recording Secretary

