



# Office of Board of Selectmen

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## Budget Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, November 30, 2021, 6:30 p.m.

Tioga Meeting Room, Belmont Mill

Chairman Ronald Mitchell called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Also present were Mark Ekberg, Assistant TA Alicia Jipson, Albert Akerstrom, Mark Roberts (arrived at 6:52), Tina Fleming, Sel. Rep. Ruth Mooney, Finance Director Katherine Davis, TC/TC Cynthia DeRoy, Building and Grounds Supervisor Patrick Golden and General Assistance Director Donna Cilley. Tracey LeClair and Roland Coffin were excused.

Present via the Zoom link dedicated to tonight's meeting were members Norma Patten, Gary Grant, Sharon Ciampi, Justin Borden and Ken Ellis. Also present via Zoom link was Town Administrator Jeanne Beaudin. Those members not present in person at the meeting had previously confirmed that they had a viable reason for not being able to attend in person. Chairman Mitchell noted that all votes would be by roll call.

### Minutes

Albert Akerstrom moved the minutes of the meeting held on November 16, 2021 as written; seconded by Mark Ekberg; Chairman Mitchell called for a roll call vote and the motion passed unanimously.

### Town Clerk Functions and Financial Administration (Tax Collection)

TC/TC DeRoy reviewed the changes in her office, noting that she had hired two new staff members Jeanne Hibbard-Bickford and Jennifer Mooney to fill vacancies in the Deputy and Clerk positions. She reviewed their training and current levels of certification. She noted that Covid was still in the background but that most office functions had returned to normal. She highlighted the overages in her current budget relating them primarily to the increased online activity resulting from Covid. She noted that motor vehicle revenues are up, and that most other revenues have remained steady. She highlighted a few changes in her budget including wage adjustments due to experience and the need to stay competitive in the market. Tina Fleming commented on the online services now available to the community and thanked Cynthia for instituting these changes within her office. Cynthia commented on how helpful the Belmont Post Office has been in facilitating the quick turnaround for registrations sent through the mail to residents in Belmont.

Norma Patten moved line items 4140-101 through 4140-999 for discussion; seconded by Mark Ekberg.

Chairman Mitchell inquired about equipment needs and TC/TC DeRoy commented that her office is in good shape and that she may only need equipment related to the elections, noting that the State is looking at transitioning to an electronic voter check-in process vs the current system. Chairman Mitchell noted there were no further questions and called for a vote of the Committee; roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

TC/TC DeRoy noted that tax bills had been sent in mid-November and are due on December 15<sup>th</sup>, however as of today she has already collected \$2 million of the \$10 million dollar tax commitment. She congratulated Belmont taxpayers on their efforts to pay their tax bills. She noted in July she collected 94% of her commitment. Chairman Mitchell commented on the increase in the tax rate.

Albert Akerstrom moved lines 4150-101 through 4150-999 for discussion; seconded by Norma Patten.

TC/TC DeRoy commented on the success of the online payments. Chairman Mitchell comment on the computer line asking about security; Finance Director Davis noted that security of the Town's IT system is covered under General Government Buildings. TA Beaudin noted that this line covers software maintenance contracts as well as any small equipment purchases such as monitors. Chairman Mitchell noted there were no further questions and called for a vote of the Committee; roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

### **Elections and Registration**

Cynthia DeRoy explained that the increases in the Elections & Registrations budget relate to the number of elections to be held in 2022; that number being 3.

Mark Ekberg moved line items 4141-101 through 4141-999 for discussion; seconded by Mark Roberts. Sel. Rep. Mooney commented on Al Nix's service to the community as moderator noting that he had recently received a Community Heritage award from the Heritage Committee for his generous service to the Town. An inquiry was made as to who was the Assistant Moderator; it was noted that it is Tom Goulet. Chairman Mitchell noted there were no further questions and called for a vote of the Committee; roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

### **General Government Buildings**

Building and Grounds Supervisor Patrick Golden was present at the meeting and provided an update to the Committee on the past year's activities. He noted the challenges of Covid had required a strenuous cleaning schedule for Town Hall. He noted that one of the Department's most important events which they set up for is Old Home Day. He explained that the DPW department had provided support to Building and Grounds during this busy time of year. He reported that the Town Hall had seen some minor settling this past year which had affected the sewer drain pipe; Rowell's was able to repair for minimal cost. He reviewed the exterior repairs done this year at the Mill which included all of the windows, which were secured, painted and placed back in with the appropriate caulking and sealant. He commented that the heat at the Mill must be kept operational on all 4 floors because of the type of system, which can be costly in the winter. He noted that the oil tanks at the Mill which were 25 years old had been replaced this fall and the new ones have been inspected and certified.

There were a few minor repairs to the bandstand this past year including the floor boards which had appeared worn and in need of paint, otherwise it is in very good shape. The department does maintain a lot of grounds.

Chairman Mitchell inquired about the roof trusses noting that they had been shored up several years ago; Patrick reported that everyone continues to look good, there are no leaks, his department has had to repair some flashing but otherwise the roof itself and the interior are ok. Patrick noted he had inspected all of it this past summer.

Tina Fleming moved line items 4194-101 through 4194-980 for discussion; seconded by Mark Roberts. Chairman Mitchell commented on the good job Patrick's department had been doing relative to the village trail, it was noted that the cameras had been stolen from the bridge. Patrick did note that he and Kyle routinely on a daily basis inspect the bridge, the bandstand and the exterior of all buildings. There was an inquiry regarding the increase in the part time line, it was noted that it was for part time assistance with building and grounds as well as for the part time cleaner for Town Hall. Chairman Mitchell noted there were no further questions and called for a vote of the Committee; roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

#### **General Assistance Administration and Vendor Payments**

General Assistance Donna Cilley provided an overview her department, noting that it had been extremely busy this year, stressing the increase in the homeless population including for the first time 7 homeless seniors. She reviewed the number of individual/couples that her department had served to date; 143. She noted that she had placed 11 applicants in drug rehabilitation. Tina Fleming asked if the applicants were transient, or couch surfing, she noted in her position with the school system, they are seeing a lot of doubling up. Review of current shelter availability, federal and state aid programs and funds coming in to the Community Action program. Donna noted that she has assisted a number of individuals through the application process for this aid; she facilitated 74 applications of which 33 made the cut. Not all the homeless population is a result of drugs. Tina Fleming commented on the increase in mental health cases and Donna agreed that it is a large problem that the State must address.

Donna noted how difficult the housing market is, commenting on the increase in rental costs this year over the past. She stated there is funding for fuel assistance however she is concerned the cost of fuel will exceed the available funds. She noted that as the Committee begins looking at the budget there are line items that are not significantly expended due to the funds that were available under the numerous other programs. Ruth Mooney commented on the Town's legal responsibility to serve the needs of the General Assistance population when they meet the criteria.

Discussion followed regarding the current job market and the difficulties faced by many just to get a return call from some of the larger employers.

Tina Fleming moved line items 4441-101 through 4441-505 for discussion; Albert Akerstrom seconded the motion. There being no further questions, Chairman Mitchell called for a roll call vote and the motion passed unanimously.

Tina Fleming moved line items 4445-430 through 4445-441; Albert Akerstrom seconded the motion. Ruth Mooney noted that there had been a small adjustment to the housing line noting Donna had removed \$5,000 from the line item. Donna explained prior year's encumbrances in heating and

housing, the food pantry was also discussed. COVID was a topic of discussion and the status of testing. Discussion of options for the homeless population followed. As there were no further questions, Chairman Mitchell called for a roll call vote and the motion passed unanimously.

Sharon Ciampi thanked Donna for all her efforts noting how much it is appreciated.

### **Recreation**

Finance Director Katherine Davis highlighted the two-line items contained in the recreation budget where funding is being requested, specifically electricity and maintenance; the tennis court wall needs to be replaced with a cost estimate of \$1,500. Tina Fleming inquired about what it would take to bring the recreation department back; noting that the program used to have a committee who was active in promoting programs. Ruth Mooney explained that there had been some interest from community members however the Town has heard nothing from them since they attended the Selectmen's meeting earlier this year. She also noted that it is difficult to run a program with the uncertainty of space availability. She mentioned that she envisions the current Town Hall serving as a community center once renovations are fully complete in the Mill.

Mark Ekberg moved line items 4520-220 and 4520-305 for discussion; Mark Roberts seconded the motion. Chairman Mitchell called for a vote of the Committee; roll call was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

Ruth Mooney moved line items 4521-101 through 4521-506; seconded by Mark Roberts. Discussion followed regarding the beach budget; TA Beaudin noted how well Gatekeeper Ann Chabot had done in her first summer and noted that she is planning to return. It was noted how difficult it is to fill positions such as this and lifeguards; the Town is not planning to fill any lifeguard positions in 2022. Chairman Mitchell noted there were no further questions and called for a vote of the Committee; roll call was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

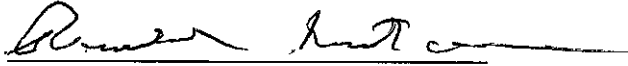
TA Beaudin commented on the Special Revenue Fund created for recreation several years ago noting that there is approximately \$25,000 in the account that could be used to offset the costs of a recreation activity were someone to come forward with a plan.

### **Other**

Finance Director Katherine Davis noted that there had been an adjustment to the Executive Budget resulting from changes during open enrollment which applies to employee's health and dental insurance. She identified the adjustments to line items 4130-314 and 4130-319. Ruth Mooney moved line item 4130-314 as proposed; seconded by Mark Roberts. Chairman Mitchell noted there were no further questions, and called for a vote of the Committee; roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously. Ruth Mooney moved line item 4130-319 as proposed; seconded by Mark Ekberg. Chairman Mitchell noted there were no further questions, and called for a vote of the Committee; roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

TA Beaudin in discussing the next meeting inadvertently missed the December 7<sup>th</sup> agenda but it was clarified that there is a meeting on December 7<sup>th</sup> and December 14<sup>th</sup>.

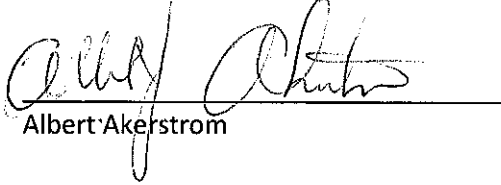
Chairman Mitchell moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:17 p.m.; roll call was taken and there were no objections.



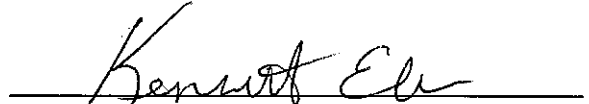
Ronald Mitchell, Chairman



Tracey LeClair, Vice Chairman



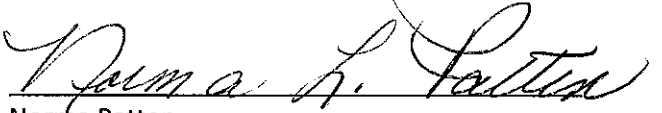
Albert Akerstrom



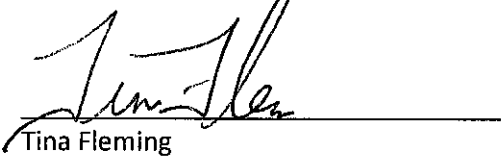
Ken Ellis



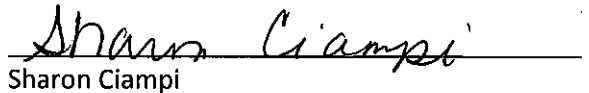
Roland Coffin



Norma Patten



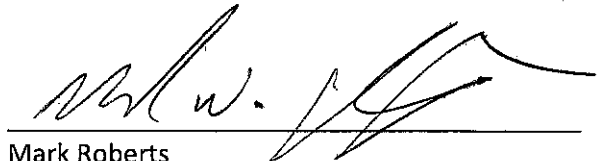
Tina Fleming



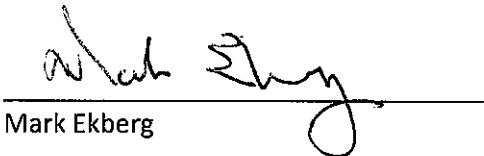
Sharon Ciampi



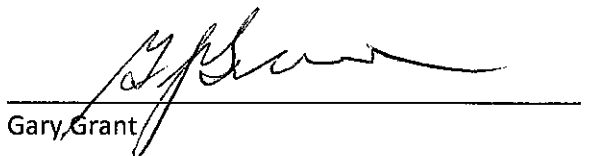
Justin David Borden



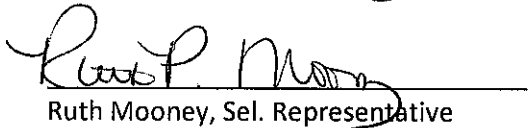
Mark Roberts



Mark Ekberg



Gary Grant



Ruth Mooney, Sel. Representative