



Office of Board of Selectmen

143 Main Street, P.O. Box 310, Belmont, New Hampshire 03220-0310
Telephone: (603) 267-8300 Fax: (603) 267-8327

Selectmen's Meeting Minutes
Monday, October 3, 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, DPW Director Craig Clairmont, Assistant DPW Director Brian Jackes, Building & Grounds Supervisor Patrick Golden, Fire Chief Mike Newhall, Assistant Fire Chief Deb Black, Police Chief Mark Lewandoski, and Cemetery Trustee Sharon Ciampi. Jeanne Beaudin Via Zoom was Finance Director Katherine Davis, former TA Jeanne Beaudin and Library Director Eileen Gilbert.

Those present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes:

Selectman Claude Patten moved the minutes of the meeting held on September 19, 2022, as written; seconded by Selectman Jon Pike and the motion passed unanimously.

Selectman Pike moved the minutes of the non-meeting held on September 19, 2022, as written; seconded by Selectman Patten and the motion passed unanimously.

New Business:

Aquarion Water Company

Mr. Josh Davis of Aquarion Water Company (formerly Abenaki) requested permission to install a 500-gallon propane tank in a 50-foot wetlands buffer zone at Tioga Drive in order to provide a generator for the facility. Chairman Ruth Mooney asked if the tank will be above ground. Mr. Davis verified yes, it will be above ground. TA Alicia Jipson stated the Board of Selectmen has authority over this wetlands buffer. She said Town Planner Sarah Whearty recommended they obtain NHDES approval before submitting any applications to the Town. Mr. Davis replied that NHDES sent an email that they have no concerns with the installation. Chairman Mooney asked how secure the tank is in the event of a flood. Mr. Davis said that a concrete pad and tie downs will be used to ensure it does not move, and that someone with the Town told him he will need stamped drawings to proceed. Selectman Pike suggested adding the NHDES comments to the application file for the Town's records.

Selectman Pike moved to grant a waiver of Article 4 Wetlands Ordinance for a 500-gallon propane tank on a slab within the **50-foot wetlands buffer** for the Aquarion pump

station at Tioga Drive. Selectman Patten seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Fire Department SAFER Grant

TA Jipson noted this is a discussion item only.

Fire Chief Mike Newhall announced that the Belmont Fire Department has been selected for the SAFER (Staffing for Adequate Fire & Emergency Response) grant to help hire firefighters and meet the minimum standards. They were denied the first two years, but were awarded the grant with their third application, and they were the only community in New Hampshire to receive the grant. The process is competitive, and Belmont was selected for a three-year grant to 100% fund six firefighters for \$1.44 million dollars. Six firefighters is based on NFPA 720, OSHA standards and other government regulations.

Selectman Pike stated six firefighters seems like a big number and asked how much money this grant is projected to cost taxpayers. Does the grant include funding for training and equipment? What is the Town responsible to pay? Chief Newhall responded that applicants will already be certified, and the grant pays for their salary and benefits. He stated overtime budget costs would be reduced with full staffing. He explained that they already have the equipment, radios, pagers, and gear, which will not cost the Town any additional money. Selectman Patten asked about uniforms. Chief Newhall said the uniform and clothing budget would not increase from his proposed budget. Chairman Mooney asked about bedroom and bathroom facilities. Chief Newhall replied that the station has adequate facilities with 4 bedrooms for the on-duty staff and one bathroom for female firefighters and two for male firefighters.

Chief Newhall explained that these positions are only for the three-year grant term, and if the Town chooses not to fund the positions at the end of the grant, these firefighters will need to look for other employment. He said it is possible that no one applies for the positions, or they may get three applicants instead of six. Laconia had additional time added to their SAFER grant because there were funds left over at the end of the three years. Applicants can be hired into the grant position and move over to a permanent position if one opens up. Then the grant position can be filled again. This saves the Town money.

Chairman Mooney asked if there is a penalty if firefighters aren't hired immediately. Chief Newhall said no, the money stays there until it is drawn down. It may be possible to extend the grant with a FEMA waiver if they can't fill all six positions in three years. He said he would like to get to 4 firefighters per shift, but daytime positions are difficult to fill. Selectman Pike commented on the Fire Department support at today's meeting. Lieutenant Firefighter Tom Murphy said they support the increase in manpower. Belmont Fire Department is behind other fire departments in the area. The extra help would be helpful, and it is needed. Selectman Pike said thank you to the firefighters for coming out today.

Taxpayer "Bonnie" spoke in support of the grant. She said the additional staff would give her security knowing there are two ambulances staffed, especially if one is in Concord. Chief Newhall said they don't have enough staffing sometimes so there are 2nd and 3rd calls about 40% of the time. They have to use Mutual Aid 20% of the time because they don't have enough staffing to transport patients. When that happens, another Town collects the \$75,000-\$80,000 for those 200 calls.

There was discussion about Mutual Aid services. There is a Lakes Region and a Concord Compact. Canterbury belongs to the Concord Compact region. Belmont gets \$5,000 per year from Canterbury to cover from around Shaker Village back towards Belmont. Chief Newhall estimates Belmont covers about 100 Canterbury calls per year.

Selectman Pike had concerns about how to project a budget for the additional costs to the Town for this grant, particularly because we don't know how many firefighters will be part of the grant program. How can a number be proposed to the Budget Committee? This is an unknown thing. Chairman Mooney said if you add six people, there are more expenses. TA Jipson explained the grant only covers the base salary and benefits such as health and dental. Some of the items that are not included are physicals, training, education, overtime pay and holiday pay. Chief Newhall responded that the salary includes holiday pay. Chief Newhall asserted that he will not be asking for any changes to his current proposed budget. Selectman Pike said they need some time to digest the information.

Donna Cilley-Lewandoski asked if the applicants will be firefighters or firefighter/EMTs. Chief Newhall said all firefighters are cross-trained. Selectman Patten asked what happens in three years? Chief Newhall said the applicants know the positions are grant positions when they accept an offer. They understand there is an end date to their contract. He encouraged everyone to contact him with any questions they might have. Selectman Patten asked for a guarantee that the budget would not increase if this grant is accepted. Chief Newhall assured the Board there would be no change in the budget he is proposing.

Election Day/Floating Holiday – Tuesday, November 8th, 2022

TA Jipson informed the Board that the biennial Election Day holiday is November 8th. She noted that Veterans' Day is Friday, November 10th and taking Election Day as a holiday would result in Town Hall being closed two days that week. Sometimes the Board uses the day as a floating holiday, such as the Friday before Christmas. The Board discussed leaving the holiday as is. Building & Grounds Director Patrick Golden noted that their department and the Town Clerk's office have to work Election Day even if it is a holiday and he would prefer a floating holiday. Former TA Jeanne Beaudin said that in the past this holiday was allowed to be used for a floating holiday at Christmas. This year Christmas is on a Sunday with Monday the designated holiday. The observed holiday would be the Friday before Christmas. Former TA Beaudin also mentioned that when this has been reviewed earlier in the year, sometimes changes were made with the 4th of July holiday. The Board was in agreement with using the Friday before Christmas as the observed holiday for the Biennial Election Day.

Casella Curbside Collection Ordinance Clean Up & Contract Language

TA Jipson informed the Board that the Solid Waste Ordinance will need some cleanup language with regards to bags/toters and the different sizes once the automated collection program starts. We have been reviewing the list of roads, the contract, and the ordinance. There are some multi-family units that should be getting picked up. Those properties will need a letter in advance of the change to make arrangements for the solid waste. Casella is also looking for indemnification for private roads, but legal will need to review.

Other New Business:

Heritage Commission Appointments

TA Jipson brought forward requests from Heritage Commission members to be re-appointed to clean up issues with staggered terms.

Selectman Pike moved to appoint Ben and Jillian Rolfe as full members of the Heritage Commission with terms to expire 03/31/2023; and to appoint Jack and Vicki Donovan as full members with terms to expire 03/31/2025. Chairman Mooney seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

DPW New Hire

Selectman Pike moved to approve hiring Christopher Tibbets to the Department of Public Works starting 10/24/2022. Selectman Patten seconded the motion and motion passed unanimously.

PT Office Cleaner

The Town has lost their part-time office cleaner for Town Hall and the Mill. An advertisement will be posted as soon as possible.

Police Highway Safety Grant Application

the Police Department applies for this grant every year to reimburse for overtime costs. Signatures are required from TA Jipson and the Board.

Land Use Retirement

Administrative Assistant Elaine Murphy has submitted her retirement and her last day will be 10/14/2022. Town Planner Sarah Whearty has posted a notice for the job as a full-time, 5-day, 40-hour per week position.

Other Old Business:

Heritage Trail Sign Update

The Heritage Commission provided renderings of the Trail sign for the Board. B&G Supervisor Golden said it will be right by the gates and to the right-hand side. TA Jipson said the sign shows the history of the trail and the covered bridges and is consistent with other similar Town signs. B&G Supervisor Golden was unsure of the installation date, but possibly this fall.

Cameras at Sargent Park

The cameras have been installed but there has not yet been any training provided. TA Jipson is working with the company to provide necessary training.

Next Meeting: The next regular meeting date will be October 17, 2022, at 10:00am.

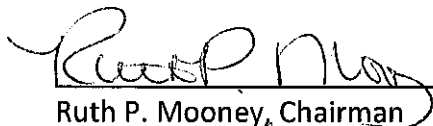
Non-Public:

Chairman Mooney moved to enter non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 II (c) at 10:51 am. Roll call was taken and those present, and voting were Jon Pike, Ruth Mooney and Claude Patten, Jr. Also present was TA Alicia Jipson and Former TA Jeanne Beaudin via Zoom. Chairman Mooney closed the Non- Public Session at 1:15 and the Board returned to public session at 1:16 pm.

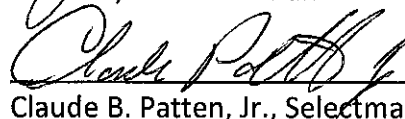
The Board directed TA Jipson to move forward with the proposed Non-Union Wage scale for 2023.

Selectmen Mooney voted to approve the proposed Union Contract for Police AFSCME Local 3657 and DPW AFSCME for the 2023-2026 contract upon a successful pass at Town Meeting in March. If the article passes at Town Meeting the contract will take affect on April 1, 2023; seconded by Selectman Pike and the vote passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:18 pm.


Ruth P. Mooney, Chairman


Jon Pike, Vice Chairman


Claude B. Patten, Jr., Selectman