



Office of Board of Selectmen

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Selectmen's Meeting Minutes
Monday, April 17, 2023, 10:00 am
Belmont Mill, 14 Mill Street
Tioga Meeting Room

Present were Chairman Ruth Mooney, Selectman Jon Pike, Selectman Claude (Sonny) Patten, Jr., Selectman Sharon Ciampi, TA Alicia Jipson, Assessing Admin Colleen Akerman, DPW Director Craig Clairmont, Assistant DPW Director Brian Jackes, Building & Grounds Supervisor Patrick Golden, Parks & Recreation Director Danielle St. Onge, Police Chief Mark Lewandoski, Captain Stephen Akerstrom, General Assistance Director Donna Cilley, Fire Chief Mike Newhall, Assistant Fire Chief Deb Black, Librarian Eileen Gilbert, and Planning Board Member Kevin Sturgeon. Via ZOOM were Finance Director Katherine Davis, Interim Town Planner Karen Santoro, and Town Clerk/Tax Collector Assistants Jenn Thomas and Leigh Smith.

Absent: Selectman Travis O'Hara.

Those present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes:

Selectman Jon Pike moved the minutes of the public meeting held on April 3, 2023 as written; seconded by Selectman Sonny Patten. Roll Call 1: J. Pike – aye, S. Patten – aye, S. Ciampi – aye, R. Mooney – aye. Motion passed (4-0).

Public Hearing – SAFER Grant:

This public hearing is held in accordance with RSA 31:95-b to accept a grant in the amount of \$571,776.20 from the Department of Homeland Security for Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant opportunity.

Chairman Mooney opened the public hearing at 10:00am.

Fire Chief Mike Newhall explained they are advertising for two new fire fighters, and they are processing applications. The grant is for three years, but they can keep advertising and looking for qualified applicants within the grant parameters. If it takes a long time to hire someone, we can ask to extend the grant.

There was no other public comment or discussion.

The public hearing was closed at 10:04 am.

Selectman Patten moved to accept a grant in the amount of \$571,776.20 from the Department of Homeland Security for Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant opportunity for the reimbursement of wages and benefits for 2 Firefighters for a 3- year period starting in 2023; seconded by Selectman Sharon Ciampi. Roll Call 2: S. Ciampi – aye, S. Patten – aye, J. Pike – aye, R. Mooney – aye. Motion passed (4-0).

New Business:

Trevor Gilbert Pinning FD:

Chief Newhall explained that after 6 months or 1 year, a new fire fighter will earn their badge and get pinned. They are no longer on probationary status and have become a full-time fire fighter. Fire fighter Trevor Gilbert came to Belmont last year from Loudon. He was pinned by his wife. The Board congratulated Fire Fighter Gilbert.

Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) Amendment Acceptance:

The Town accepted the EMPG grant last year. This amendment will extend the period of performance for the updated Emergency Operations Plan. Signatures of the Board are also required to obtain reimbursement.

There was no public comment or discussion.

Selectman Pike moved that the Select Board, by a majority vote, accepts the terms of the Emergency Management Performance Grant amendment as presented, to reflect the change of Period of Performance dates from August 31, 2022, to August 31, 2023, and also authorize Chairman Ruth Mooney to sign all documents related to the grant; seconded by Selectman Patten. Roll Call 3: S. Patten – aye, S. Ciampi – aye, J. Pike – aye, R. Mooney – aye. Motion passed (4-0).

Chief Newhall noted that this Emergency Operations Plan will be good for five years.

Selectman Sharon Ciampi stepped down from the Board.

Cemetery Trustees Alternate Appointments Request:

Cemetery Trustee Sharon Ciampi stated the Trustees have two applicants for the Alternate Trustee positions to expire March 2024.

Selectman Pike moved to approve the Cemetery Trustees' request to appoint Norma Patten and Kevin Sturgeon as Cemetery Trustee Alternates with terms to expire March 2024; seconded by Selectman Patten. Roll Call 4: J. Pike – aye, S. Ciampi – abstained, S. Patten – aye, R. Mooney – aye. Motion passed (3-0-1).

Cemetery Trustee Ciampi reported they can't locate anyone to repair the fence at Dow Cemetary Previously Selectman Pike recommended having Building & Grounds complete the

work. What is the procedure for doing that? Can they do it or do the Trustees have to hire someone?

Building & Grounds Supervisor Patrick Golden said last year he priced the project out at less than \$500. He would have time to schedule this project when they have their additional seasonal part-time man this summer. They would be able to get the work completed in one day.

It was the consensus of the Board to have Building & Grounds complete the project this summer.

Selectman Sharon Ciampi rejoined the Board.

Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) Update – Brian Jackes:

Assistant DPW Director Brian Jackes reviewed a grant TAC wanted brought forward to communities for electric vehicle charging stations. The stations are fully funded but there are extra expenses the Town would have to come up with such as getting electricity from the pole to the station, which could be \$10,000. They would recommend putting one at the library or at the Mill. The first phase of grants closes in May and then the second phase will open. If someone is interested in investing the time in it, we could see what would be included in the grant and determine if we are interested. There are some stations in Tilton near the I-93 corridor. The thought is that people would walk around downtown while their vehicle was charging. TA Alicia Jipson suggested the Park & Ride may also be a good location for something like this.

Assistant DPW Director Jackes confirmed the Route 140/Main Street intersection is still in the “Ten Year Plan” for DOT. They think it could be 2023 or 2024. The water and sewer lines have been mapped out at the intersection and we can do work on them while the intersection is being upgraded.

Chairman Mooney thought there was no need to rush into the electric vehicle charging station grant. Selectman Ciampi noted she attended a webinar last year that predicted more than half of New Hampshire residents would have electric cars by 2030. She recommended being proactive with the grant.

DPW Director Craig Clairmont stated places like the library are the best locations for these stations.

Water System Rules and Fees Updates – Brian Jackes:

Assistant DPW Director Jackes informed the Board the last time the rules were updated was July 13, 2008, when they were adopted by the Board. Underwood Engineering has been working on a rate usage study for the Town. Belmont’s water rates are some of the lowest in the region. The Town can change some of the fees for services for day-to-day operations. There is a base unit charge, and the usage fees are separate. Water users often ask why the

unit charge is left in place when the water is shut off. They suggested language be added to the rules regarding shutoffs and updated fees such as the fixed quarterly rate. It outlines what is already being done but backs it up in writing.

DPW analyzed the fees and looked at the costs associated with different functions such as shutoffs. They send out a foreman and a truck driver, in teams of 2 for safety. One hour is approximately \$55. Chairman Mooney asked for clarification on whether the PUC needed to approve changes. The rules say the Board has the authority to make these types of changes, but the usage rates are different, and Underwood is involved with those. Chairman Mooney said we can't lose money for these services, and we need to break even.

A separate fee for final readings is also proposed. When real estate is sold, a final reading is requested, and the Town Clerk's Office has to generate a bill. There is time to take the physical reading and to generate the bill. They would recommend a flat fee of \$55 to recoup some of the expense. They have done 12 of these this year, and one property they had to do twice because the first buyer backed out. There was discussion about budget, expenses and incoming payments. The Board requested Finance Director Katherine Davis do an analysis before a decision is made about the fee changes. Chairman Mooney and Selectman Pike were concerned that \$55 may not be enough to cover expenses.

Another item reviewed was callouts. If there is a service call after hours, employees are paid a minimum of two hours and the customer should be billed for the same time.

Selectman Pike asked about selling the water system. DPW Director Brian Jackes stated things would be much more expensive with a private company.

DPW Director Clairmont noted the department did some comparisons with other Towns but they don't want to hit everyone too hard at first.

Belmont Baseball Organization (BBO) – Parade Request:

Don Miller from the BBO outlined the parade as starting at the pavilion and moving to Mill Street, Main Street, School Street and then Bryant Field. The Police Department would need to assist with temporary road closures. Police Chief Mark Lewandoski stated he has already talked with Mr. Miller about the parade and route. Mr. Miller explained they have a new BBO Board and have restructured things. He is new to the Board, and they have 125 participants and 30 volunteers this year, and tons of sponsors. The parade will have banners for the teams. He anticipates it will be about 30-45 minutes long; with participants lining up at 8:45am and starting the parade at 9:00am.

Selectman Pike moved to allow the BBO to hold a parade on May 6th, 2023 and allow the temporary road closures of portions of Main Street, Mill Street, and School Street while the parade is en route; seconded by Selectman Patten. Roll Call 5: S. Patten – aye, J. Pike – aye, S. Ciampi – aye, R. Mooney – aye. Motion passed (4-0).

Lakes Region Public Access (LRPA) Agreement Renewal:

TA Jipson reviewed the renewal agreement for public access to Livestream and videos. In addition to meetings, LRPA has recorded events such as Old Home Day, the Deliberative Session, the NHDES update and more. They maintain the Livestream and content is available 24/7 on their VOD channel. Franchise fees from Breezeline and Comcast pay for this agreement.

There was no public comment or discussion.

Selectman Ciampi moved to approve the Lakes Region Public Access agreement with the 2023-2024 total contract fee of \$11,474.07 paid out of franchise fees; seconded by Selectman Pike. Roll Call 6: S. Ciampi – aye, J. Pike – aye, S. Patten – aye, R. Mooney – aye. Motion passed (4-0).

Beautify Belmont - April 21-23, 2023:

TA Jipson said this event would be paired with Earth Day and Parks & Recreation Director Danielle St. Onge has been working on getting a group together. The schools are participating. Building & Grounds has already started cleanups downtown so Parks & Rec will work on the beach area and around the WOW Trail to start with.

Blue bags for this cleanup are available at the Highway Department and Town Hall. There are sign up sheets for people to list the street name they will be cleaning so DPW knows where to go to pickup the bags on Monday, April 24, 2023.

Selectman Ciampi asked if it would be okay to start cleanups early. They have a group working on Jamestown and Union Road. DPW Director Clairmont said yes, if they see bags out they will be picked up.

Other New Business:

New Hampshire Electric Co-Op (NHEC) Vegetation Control:

NHEC has notified the Town they will be spraying herbicides for vegetation control beneath their lines. A topographical map with locations was provided and forwarded to DPW. Door hangers will be left with abutters regarding the herbicide use.

Government Office for Emergency Relief & Recovery:

There is a program that could help with a municipal boat launch if the Board is interested. There would be a lot of work to be done and it could be a liability.

It was the consensus of the Board to not pursue a municipal boat launch.

Other Old Business:

Auction Companies for Dearborn Street Property:

TA Jipson has researched auction companies for municipal properties. They both have a 10% buyer's premium and there is no cost to the Town. St. Jean Auctioneers did a drive by on the property and estimated it could sell for \$50,000-\$60,000. Chairman Mooney noted once it has been built up the Town will be able to collect taxes from the property. The other company recommended an absolute bid but that could be risky. We could do a minimum bid and accept a lower bid if there is a close bid. The Town has \$59,000 into the property with the demo and back taxes. The current assessment is \$47,500. St. Jean Auctioneers has 8,000 people on their email list, thousands who visit their website and they advertise heavily.

It was the consensus of the Board to move forward with St. Jean Auctioneers.

Abutters of the landlocked property off Route 140 were noticed and Pike Industries may be interested in the parcel. They will think about it and get back to the Town.

Fire Department Thank You:

Chief Newhall wanted to recognize and thank Manchester and Barnstead for loaning their ladder trucks out for flags for yesterday's funeral procession to honor US Marshal Dan Dempsey.

Next Meeting: The next regular meeting will be **Monday, May 1, 2023, at 10:00 am.**

Non-Public:

Chairman Mooney moved to enter non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 II (c) at 11:15 am; seconded by Selectman Pike. Roll Call 7: S. Ciampi - aye, J. Pike – aye, S. Patten – aye, R. Mooney – aye. Motion passed (4-0).

Those present and voting were Ruth Mooney, Jon Pike, Claude Patten, Jr., and Sharon Ciampi. Also present were TA Alicia Jipson, Police Chief Mark Lewandoski and Captain Stephen Akerstrom. Discussion was had about recent employment departures in the department and how to best address the retention and what avenues we have if any. TA Jipson and Chief will brainstorm ideas on how to address the issues. Chief and Akerstrom left the meeting.

Selectman Pike motioned to leave Non-public and return to public session; seconded by Selectman Patten.

Vote in favor 4-0

The Board returned to public session at 12:14 pm.

Discussion was had in extending the application acceptance for the Fire Chief an additional 2-weeks and appoint Assistant Deb Black as the Interim Fire Chief Effective May 1, 2023.


Vote in favor 4-0

Discussion was had in entering into a lease for 2 new Police Cruisers. Selectman Pike said he feels we can get more at auction for the cruisers than the dealer wants to give for a trade. DPW has shown interest in one of the old cruisers as the truck he uses at DPW is old. It was the consensus of the Board to give 1 of the old cruisers to DPW and take one cruiser to the auction and use the sale price at auction to offset the cruiser lease.

Vote in favor 4-0.

Adjournment:


Selectman Mooney moved to adjourn the meeting at 12:15 pm seconded by Selectman Patten. Vote in Favor 4-0 and the motion passed unanimously.



Ruth P. Mooney, Chairman




Jon Pike, Vice Chairman



Claude B. Patten, Jr., Selectman

Travis O'Hara, Selectman



Sharon Ciampi, Selectman