



Office of Board of Selectmen

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Selectmen's Meeting Minutes

NON-PUBLIC SESSION

Wednesday, July 5, 2023, 11:14 am

Belmont Mill, 14 Mill Street

Tioga Meeting Room

Non-Public Session:

Selectman Ciampi moved to enter non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 II (c and e) at 11:14 am; seconded by Selectman Patten. Roll Call 3: S. Patten – aye, S. Ciampi – aye, J. Pike – aye, T. O'Hara – aye, R. Mooney – aye. Motion passed (5-0).

Those present and voting were Chairman Ruth Mooney, Selectman Jon Pike, Selectman Claude "Sonny" Patten, Jr., Selectman Travis O'Hara, and Selectman Sharon Ciampi. Also present were TA Alicia Jipson and Assessing Admin Colleen Akerman.

It was the consensus of the Board to allow Assessing Admin Colleen Akerman to remain in attendance to take minutes of the non-public session.

Water & Sewer Rate Study:

Rates have not been raised in a very long time. Underwood Engineering did a rate study as part of the paperwork for the iron and manganese treatment back in 2018, but no changes were made. The study was good through 2023. Chairman Mooney and Selectman Pike said they had talked about rates and thought changes were made. TA Jipson said the Board would need to have a public hearing and they did not have one. We are losing a lot of money because this has not been implemented. Underwood says the State is not moving forward with changing the iron and manganese levels anytime soon so that part of the contract has been ended. The cost to have a rate study done is almost \$30,000.

Other communities have provided information about how they update their rates and formulas. We should be able to project what we should be charging based on income and expenses. The Board would like TA Jipson and Finance Director Katherine Davis to calculate new rates. The Board discussed whether a step increase may be needed if we are very far behind. There was also discussion about comparisons to other towns and how some are metered and others are not. Belmont is a flat rate. The rates are user fees only and they have their own warrant articles, but the system is only paid for by user fees. It was the consensus of the Board to not move forward with the engineered rate study and instead have the study completed in-house.

Ambulance Fees:

It has been policy to waive the ambulance fees for anyone who passes. Would the Board like to continue that policy, or would they like to review the requests individually? It was the consensus of the Board to waive the ambulance fees for anyone who is a Belmont resident.

Automated Curbside Collection:

Recently it was determined that a small condominium association is receiving curbside collection, but they do not meet the requirements of the Solid Waste ordinance. Letters were mailed last week to the association giving them until September 1st to make other arrangements. The carts will be picked up by Casella.

Code Enforcement Legal Matters:

The property owners at 194 Gilmanton Road were denied a special exception to expand a contractor's yard at the ZBA meeting last Wednesday. If someone makes a complaint, the evidence will be accepted and documented and our counsel will file a motion for contempt. Our CEO is not allowed on the property and is not allowed to communicate with the owners. Their legal team may subpoena everyone on the Boards. All electronic documents and any recordings of the hearing will need to be preserved. We are uncertain if they will appeal the ZBA's decision.

TA Jipson and CEO Mark Ekberg will meet with Town Counsel today regarding 752 Laconia Road and 130 Depot Street. There are court hearings next week where CEO Ekberg will state the case. TA Jipson will attend, and the Board may also attend. 752 Laconia Road requested to continue but a determination has not yet been made.

Police Department Contracts:

New uncertified police officers are sent to the academy for training. They signed a contract that states the cost and what it entails, and they agree to stay with Belmont PD for three years. If the contract is broken, they owe a prorated repayment to the Town within 30 days. Recently two officers broke their contracts. One owes \$12,876 and the other owes a similar amount. One asked for the contract breakdown but the numbers are liquid. For instance the contract does not include the OT costs for other officers while an officer is at training, or the OT costs to fill their positions when they leave. It is not easily quantifiable. One of the officers suggested a settlement of \$8,800. The concern is that this will set a precedent. They do owe the money but if we have to go to court we will need to spend money. TA Jipson said if we go to court they will have to pay the legal fees if we win. Barnstead recently won a similar case. If the repayment is not made within 30 days, perhaps a payment plan of up to 6 months could be negotiated; but the price is not negotiable.

Selectman Pike moved to not accept the settlement of \$8,800 in lieu of the repayment of \$12,876; 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).

County Excess ARPA Funds:

The county is granting each town \$20,000. The Police Department has already come forward with a proposal. TA Jipson suggested soliciting ideas from Department Heads and the Board on how to spend the funds. ARPA rules have to be followed and it has to be a public service or something the Town would otherwise need to raise taxes for. We don't have full guidance on the grant yet. Any suggestions can be submitted to TA Jipson for consideration by the Board.

Selectman O'Hara left the meeting at 12:00 pm.

Sale of Town-owned Parcel 235-073-000-000:

There is a small parcel of landlocked property off Depot Street that was offered to abutters in 2020. Pike is interested in the parcel. Town Counsel stated there would not be a need for a sealed bid if the Board of Selectmen was given authority to dispose of property, by adoption at a Town Meeting. The Board has had that authority since 1993.

Selectman Pike moved to sell parcel 235-073 to abutter Pike Industries for \$2,396 in back taxes; seconded by Selectman Ciampi. Roll Call 5: S. Patten – aye, J. Pike – aye, S. Ciampi – aye, R. Mooney – aye. Motion passed (4-0).

TC/TC Retirement:

TA Jipson would like to hold a surprise retirement party for TC/TC Cynthia DeRoy after the next BOS meeting on July 19th at 12 pm. Town Hall employees, Department Heads, BOS and some of her family would be invited. It was the consensus of the Board to cater in food and close Town Hall from 12 pm – 1 pm. It will not be open to the public.

4 Leisure Lane – 121-093-000-000:

The information available indicates the prior owner of this property is incarcerated and his wife or girlfriend lives in Laconia or Gilford. They have family residing at the home. The eviction process has been started and they need to be out by August 1st. A realtor called asking how much to buy the property back. There is \$30,000 in back taxes and sewer, plus legal fees, etc. Only the owner can legally purchase the property back. The Board will need to decide what to do at some point in the future.

Employee Complaint:

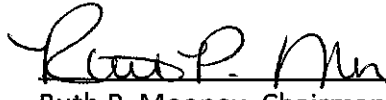
A complaint was received from a resident regarding inappropriate behavior by a department head in a few meetings. A similar letter addressed to the previous TA was received in 2020. Chairman Mooney noted the parties involved are related and there has been ongoing tension for many years. The complainant requested a meeting with the Board. It was the consensus of the Board to not meet with the complainant. They do not want to set a precedent of meeting over every employee complaint.

Selectman Pike moved to seal the non-public session minutes as disclosure would render proposed actions ineffective; seconded by Chairman Mooney. Roll Call 6: S. Ciampi – aye, J. Pike – aye, S. Patten – aye, R. Mooney – aye. Motion passed (4-0).

The Board returned to public session at 12:20 pm.

Adjournment:

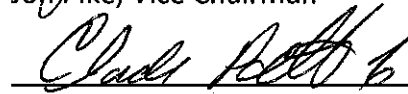
Chairman Mooney moved to adjourn the meeting at 12:20 pm; seconded by Selectman Ciampi. Roll Call 7: S. Ciampi – aye, J. Pike – aye, S. Patten – aye, R. Mooney – aye. Motion passed (4-0).



Ruth P. Mooney, Chairman

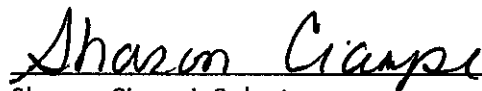


Jon Pike, Vice Chairman



Claude B. Patten, Jr., Selectman

Travis O'Hara, Selectman



Sharon Ciampi, Selectman