



Office of Board of Selectmen

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Selectmen's Meeting Minutes
Monday, November 13, 2023, 10:00 am
Belmont Mill, Corner Meeting House Room

Present were Chairman Ruth Mooney, Selectman Jon Pike, Selectman Claude Patten, Jr., Selectman Travis O'Hara, Selectman Sharon Ciampi, TA Alicia Jipson, Assessing Admin Colleen Akerman, Town Planner Karen Santoro, Police Lieutenant Evan Boulanger, DPW Director Craig Clairmont, Finance Director Susan Hickey, Fire Chief Deb Black, Building & Grounds Supervisor Patrick Golden, Parks & Rec Director Danielle St. Onge and Cemetery Trustee Hilary Horn. Via Zoom were Deputy Town Clerk/Tax Collector Jenn Thomas, Land Use Administrative Assistant Susan Austin and Library Director Eileen Gilbert.

Those present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Review & Approve Minutes – 11/01/2023:

Selectman Jon Pike moved the minutes of the meeting held on November 1, 2023 as written; seconded by Selectman Sonny Patten. Motion passed unopposed (5-0).

Public Hearings:

Chairman Ruth Mooney opened the public hearings at 10:03 am.

Public Hearing – Traffic Ordinance:

This public hearing was held on proposed changes to the Ordinance Regulating Traffic.

The Board discussed downtown parking changes at a previous meeting. Year-round, it was proposed that there would be no overnight parking on Mill Street, or in the Pavilion or Mill parking lots. This will help provide safer and more timely snow removal in inclement weather. Currently there is a seasonal overnight parking ban on Main Street and other roadways from November 15th through April 15th.

There was no public comment.

Selectman Pike moved to amend the Traffic Ordinance as presented; seconded by Selectman Travis O'Hara. Motion passed unopposed (5-0).

Public Hearing – COPS Grant:

This public hearing was held in accordance with RSA 31:95-b to accept a COPS Hiring Program Grant in the amount of \$250,000.

Police Lieutenant Evan Boulanger noted the Board had previously approved the department's request to submit an application for this grant. It was a very competitive grant with under 400 awarded in the country, and only three in the state of New Hampshire. Belmont was also the only 1 in NH awarded more than one position. We are understaffed and our people are overworked compared to the average agencies. Exit interviews have proven that burnout is an issue. These new positions should help alleviate overtime issues. This is a 3 year grant with 5 years for performance but they hope to start filling the positions right away. The Town must agree to absorb the officers for 12 months after the grant ends. If the person leaves employment, the grant is prorated. It will be \$250,000 for two officers over 3 years. The Town will have to pick up some of the other costs.

There was no public comment.

Selectman Pike moved to accept a COPS Hiring Program Grant for \$250,000 in accordance with RSA 31:95-b; seconded by Selectman O'Hara. Motion passed unopposed (5-0).

Selectman O'Hara moved to close the public hearings at 10:12 am; seconded by Selectman Sharon Ciampi. Motion passed unopposed (5-0).

New Business:

New Hires – Finance Director, Clerk, DPW, Fire Department:

TA Alicia Jipson introduced Susan Hickey, who is our new Finance Director. She said the Town Clerk/Tax Collector's office has also filled all of their positions. Last week Samantha LeClair started and next week Devon Tibbets will start. DPW has hired a full time seasonal employee, Noel Lopez. The Fire Department recently hired Cyle Moore and Robert Caruolo. They only have one more opening plus the Assistant Chief position to fill. DPW Director Craig Clairmont noted this is the first time in four years the DPW has been fully staffed.

Household Hazardous Waste Day Rate Update FY 2024:

TA Jipson reported the 2024 commitment has increased from about \$6,000 to \$8,408 dollars. DPW Director Clairmont stated they use the program as an outlet for collecting used motor oil for their heating system, and for disposal of items they have to collect from the roads. If Belmont discontinues this program, he is not sure where they could bring items.

Chairman Mooney moved to accept the 2024 Household Hazardous Waste proposal for \$8,408; seconded by Selectman Ciampi. Motion passed (4-1).

Selectman Ciampi stepped down from the Board.

Cemetery Trustees Public Notice Update:

Cemetery Trustees Sharon Ciampi and Hilary Horn presented information about the public notice to be posted for the Board to declare seven different cemeteries as abandoned, in order to officially take over and take on the same rights as a descendant for protection and care of the cemeteries. The Town has already been maintaining all of these cemeteries for many,

many years. Chairman Mooney was in favor of posting the notice but Selectman Patten was opposed. He does not want things disrupted. Selectman Pike agrees with Selectman Patten. There was discussion about the additional cost for caretaking, however the Town already pays to maintain these locations. The Trustees explained that this process is highly recommended by Candace Daigle and the NH Cemetery Association. This process is unrelated to any attempts to obtain perpetual funds for care reimbursement. The Trustees are concerned about protecting the grounds and the history and heritage. This process will help provide transparency to buyers of properties where cemeteries are located, which will help to protect the grounds and those buried there. Selectman Pike appreciates what the Trustees are doing but thinks they are overstepping. Chairman Mooney suggested tabling the discussion to a later time. TA Jipson noted the viability of the project, and the necessity of disclosing these sites to those who own or may develop the properties. Town Planner Karen Santoro stated applicants submitting surveys are asked to note cemetery setbacks when the Land Use Department is aware of any burial grounds, however they are not always aware.

Selectman Ciampi returned to the Board.

Gale School Redevelopment Update:

Lakes Region Community Developers and the Save the Gale School Committee will be hosting a status update for the community on November 29th at 5:30 PM at the Belmont Mill.

Senior Group Request:

Senior Group representative Susan Roache thanked the Board for letting their group use the downstairs space while the elevator is being worked on. Their group is growing and the space is small, so she has had to limit the number of attendees. They would like to move back upstairs when the elevator is finished; until the rest of the building plans are completed. Their group looks forward to working with Danielle St. Onge from Parks & Rec for future programs. The Seniors would like to help with some Got Lunch events and the second floor space would be perfect. Chairman Mooney said the Board is unable to make any decisions until the elevator is complete, but she would not want the space to be left unused. The Board will make a decision once the elevator work is completed.

2023 Tax Rate:

The tax rate was set by the State last Thursday before the long weekend. It decreased from \$19.11 for 2022, to \$17.47 for 2023. The breakdown is: \$5.86 Town, \$0.89 County, \$9.47 Local School, and \$1.25 State Education. It has been publicized on the Town website and in the newsletter. Selectman Pike recommended a press release to the newspaper as well.

Request State to Sell Property on Route 106 (Travis O'Hara):

Selectman O'Hara said the Town would need to make a request to the State to sell the property at 3 Higgins Drive. This would get the property back onto the tax rolls. A formal letter would be prepared for Board members to sign.

Selectman Pike moved to request that the State sell the property located at 3 Higgins Drive; seconded by Selectman Ciampi. Motion passed unopposed (5-0).

Senior Giving Tree:

TA Jipson and Parks & Rec Director Danielle St. Onge thought it would be a good idea to have a holiday gift program for seniors, because there are lots of organizations that help children. There will be forms at Town Hall or the Library for applicants to fill out with their wants and needs and all information will be kept confidential. Residents will visit Town Hall and pick a tag off the tree to fulfill a senior's wish list.

Other New Business:

Sewer Leak:

This weekend DPW detected a break on Route 140 between Coke and Rowell's. There have been ongoing problems in that area. They offered assistance to help repair the situation but Winni River Basin (WRBP) sent a pump truck to bypass the leak for 36 hours and they expect the Town to pay for it. There is a WRBP meeting tomorrow at 1 pm and some of our Board and employees will try to attend. There are multiple issues in this area and WRBP should consider alternative solutions.

Old Business:

Amend 2024 Budget Requests:

Final budget totals were presented to the Board which include all of the health insurance updates. The Police budget was also presented with an adjusted total because the two new grant positions must be included in the budget, however there will be a revenue offset from the grant.

Chairman Mooney moved to approve the amended budget totals as presented; seconded by Selectman Pike:

Executive	\$470,102.01
Town Clerk	\$166,262.59
Tax Collection/Finance	\$355,585.20
Land Use	\$391,833.08
General Govt. Buildings	\$498,305.42
Police	\$3,198,477.40
Fire	\$2,408,503.07

Motion passed unopposed (5-0).

Condemetraky Court Denial of Injunction - 194 Gilmanton Road:

Town Planner Santoro reminded the Board the Town requested an injunction to stop a contractor's yard at the property until they obtained their Zoning and Planning Board approvals. The court denied the injunction but the Zoning Board has conditionally approved a special exception. However, they have failed to submit a Planning Board site application and

they are technically still in violation. Town Planner Santoro explained the timeline of what has transpired so far. It was the consensus of the Board to refile the injunction with amended language about the missing site plan approval. There is still a safety violation, particularly with the sight distances.

4 Leisure Lane Update:

Asbestos removal was completed and the buildings will be demoed this week or next. The Board agreed to immediately start working on the process to get the property auctioned, as they did with the Dearborn Street property earlier this year. The auction process has no cost to the Town and we should be able to recover back taxes and other expenses.

Public Comment: None

Next Meeting Date: Wednesday, December 6th, 2023 at 10:00 am.

Adjournment:

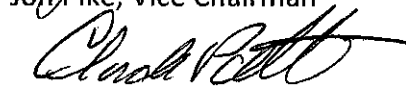
Selectman O'Hara moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:28 am; seconded by Selectman Pike. Motion passed unopposed (5-0).



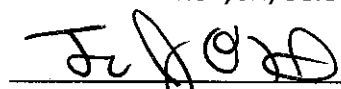
Ruth P. Mooney, Chairman



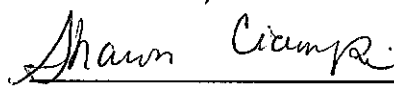
Jon Pike, Vice Chairman



Claude B. Patten, Jr., Selectman



Travis O'Hara, Selectman



Sharon Ciampi, Selectman