

Office of Board of Selectmen

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Selectmen's Meeting Minutes Wednesday, March 6, 2024, 10:00 am Belmont Mill, 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, Police Captain Stephen Akerstrom, Town Planner Karen Santoro, Finance Director Steve Forster, TC/TC Jennifer Cashman, Building Inspector/CEO Glenn Caron, Fire Chief Deb Black, Assistant Fire Chief Donald Pickowicz, DPW Director Craig Clairmont, Building & Grounds Supervisor Patrick Golden, Parks & Rec Director Danielle St. Onge, and Planning Board Member Kevin Sturgeon.

Those present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Review & Approve Minutes – Public & Non-Public 02/21/2024:

Selectman Sonny Patten moved the minutes of the public meeting held on February 21, 2024 as written; seconded by Selectman Jon Pike. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Selectman Pike moved the minutes of the non-public meeting held on February 21, 2024 as written; seconded by Selectman Travis O'Hara. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Heritage Commission Member Appointments:

Selectman Pike moved to appoint Claire Bickford to a three-year term as a Heritage Commission Member to expire 2027; seconded by Selectman Sharon Ciampi. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Selectman O'Hara moved to appoint Christopher Mooney to a three-year term as a Heritage Commission Alternate Member to expire 2027; seconded by Selectman Ciampi. Motion passed (4-0-1). Chairman Ruth Mooney abstained.

Building Official/Code Enforcement New Hire:

Town Planner Karen Santoro introduced the new Building Official/Code Enforcement Officer Glenn Caron. He started full-time on Monday and has met with the Fire Department to review duties and has been taken on a "tour" to familiarize himself with Town. Chairman Mooney thanked him for providing coverage when contract inspection services were needed.

Belmont Old Home Day Schedule/Road Closures/Vendor Fees – Danielle St. Onge:

Parks & Rec Director Danielle St. Onge said people have voted and this year's theme is "Four Seasons". She is working on the logo and forms. The Road Race will be held again at the earlier time. A preliminary schedule was distributed to Board members. The committee is

looking for an alternative for the rock wall and bungee activity due to increased costs and vendors wanting to charge the users a fee as well to use. The fireworks contract is in progress.

Selectman O'Hara moved to approve Old Home as proposed by Parks & Rec Director Danielle St. Onge for Saturday, August 10th, with vendor fees to be waived, and to approve the closure of Mill and Center Streets (between Main and Center Street) from 7:30am to 3:00pm and Main Street (between Depot Street and School Street) from 7:30am to 12:00pm for the road race and parade; seconded by Selectman Ciampi. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Leslie Roberts Drive Update:

Assessing Admin Colleen Akerman reported there is a conflict between the Town and the State with the classification of Leslie Roberts Drive that was discovered during processing an Intent to Cut Timber. Town Planner Santoro stated the Town has documents that show Leslie Roberts Drive as an access easement to an access easement, and a Limited Access Right of Way (LAROW). The Town maintains the road under an agreement for recreation and beach use. If use of the beach ceases, it extinguishes the agreement. The State shows the road as a Class V Town Road. DPW Director Craig Clairmont stated the road is not built or maintained to Town Class V standards and it will be good to figure this out. A culvert and plan for sediment may be needed for the proposed wetlands activity in the area.

NHPDIP Update:

TA Jipson and Finance Director Steve Forster explained there is a bill that would effectively shut down the NHPDIP pool, which brings in higher interest rates for municipal funds than local banks. The bill has passed two steps and only has one more to go, and it will require the NHPDIP pool to invest through local New Hampshire banks only. The Town's Capital Reserves and Operating Funds are held with NHPDIP, which was formed by legislation in 1993 when there was uncertainty in banking after the market collapse. Banks are not fail-safe but NHPDIP investors have never lost money. NHPDIP invests in funds with safety and liquidity, overseen by the New Hampshire Banking Department and the State Treasurer. There are over 240 investors and the yield is 5.4% AAA, the highest rating. There are only 43 banks in New Hampshire and only three have an A1 rating or higher. This bill will end competition once the NHPDIP pool ceases to function. NHPDIP will have until June 2025 to continue doing business as they are now, but then they will be forced go through local banks and they can't support the size of this investment. Banks could lower rates even further.

Selectman O'Hara, who is also a State Representative, said this was a bipartisan bill that was promoted as a way to help the local market and make more funds available for loans. The only chance to stop it now would be a veto from the governor. Finance Director Forster explained that large banks have not raised their money market rates because there is no incentive for them to increase their rates. Their rate is approximately 0.5% compared to NHPDIP's 5.4%. Also, keeping all of our funds in one bank is risky. Funds are usually safer in brokered firms and investment pools. It is a concern that we have more funds than the bank can insure. Chairman Mooney would like us to write a letter to the governor against this bill.

Other New Business:

Fire Department FEMA Grant:

Fire Chief Deb Black would like the Board's blessing to apply for a grant to fix their thermal imaging cameras. It is similar to the SAFER grant and is due this Friday. It is \$35,000 with a \$1,600 match, which is typical with grants. It would cover every camera for all apparatus including the ambulances. TA Jipson asked if they have the matching funds in their budget, and Chief Black responded yes, in their equipment budget.

Selectman O'Hara moved to approve proceeding with a grant application for the Fire Department's thermal imaging cameras and to approve TA Jipson to sign off on the application; seconded by Selectman Ciampi. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Building & Grounds – School Ball Field/BBO Request:

Building & Grounds Supervisor Patrick Golden had a request from the Belmont Baseball Organization to mow Field #5 which is the one down in the dip on Bryant Field. The school says they don't use that field for their athletic programs, and they do not maintain it. BBO is currently paying someone to maintain Field #5, but they are trying to save money. Building & Grounds has evaluated and estimated 3 hours of mowing, but they could only do it about once-a-week weather permitting, they don't have any baggers, and they already mow many other areas all across Town. It was the consensus of the Board that Building & Grounds not mow Field #5 at Bryant Field at this time.

Approved Settlement with Fereshetian – 752 Laconia Road:

The settlement agreement previously approved by the Board has not yet been signed by Fereshetian. The court has set a date of March 25th to check on the status of the agreement. Town Planner Santoro is keeping an eye on things, as the house is for sale by owner, being advertised with a garage apartment. The previous building official stated there was nothing there. There are no permits for a garage apartment. B&G Supervisor Golden said he had to help secure the property when the Town took it over a number of years ago, and the garage did have an apartment upstairs.

Old Business:

Mountain Lake Update:

TA Jipson and DPW Director Clairmont met with Laconia DPW and Legal and came to an agreement where the Town of Belmont will plow the roads at the Mountain Lake Subdivision, and Laconia will plow the sidewalks; as well as plowing the sidewalk on Route 3 from Laconia to the Belknap Mall. The agreement has been signed by Belmont and Laconia.

Town Meeting Reminder – Tuesday, March 12, 2024:

Town voting will take place on Tuesday, March 12, 2024 from 7am to 7pm at Belmont High School. There has been low voter turnout for the last few years.

Other Old Business:

Mill Update:

The sprinkler replacement in the entire building has been completed and is up to code. The bell tower will be lit up tonight. They will put LED lights in the stairway.

Public Comment: None

Next Meeting Date: Wednesday, March 20, 2024 at 10:00 am.

Non-Public:

Selectman O'Hara moved to enter non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 II a at 10:50am; seconded by Selectman Patten. Roll Call 1: J. Pike – aye, S. Patten – aye, T. O'Hara – aye, S. Ciampi – aye, R. Mooney – aye. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

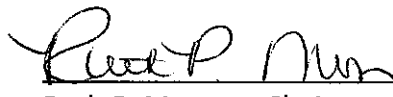
Those present and voting were Chairman Ruth Mooney and Selectmen Jon Pike, Claude Patten, Jr., Travis O'Hara, and Sharon Ciampi. Also present were TA Alicia Jipson and Assessing Admin Colleen Akerman.

The Board discussed the compensation of employees but did not make any decisions. The consensus was to get more information and do some additional research.

Selectman Pike moved to exit non-public session at 11:12am; seconded by Selectman O'Hara. Roll Call 2: S. Ciampi – aye, T. O'Hara – aye, S. Patten – aye, J. Pike – aye, R. Mooney – aye. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Adjournment:

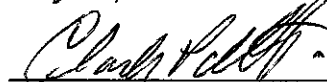
Chairman Mooney moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:12am; seconded by Selectman Patten. Roll Call 3: S. Patten – aye, S. Ciampi – aye, J. Pike – aye, T. O'Hara – aye, R. Mooney – aye. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).



Ruth P. Mooney, Chairman



Jon Pike, Vice Chairman



Claude B. Patten, Jr., Selectman



Travis O'Hara, Selectman



Sharon Ciampi, Selectman